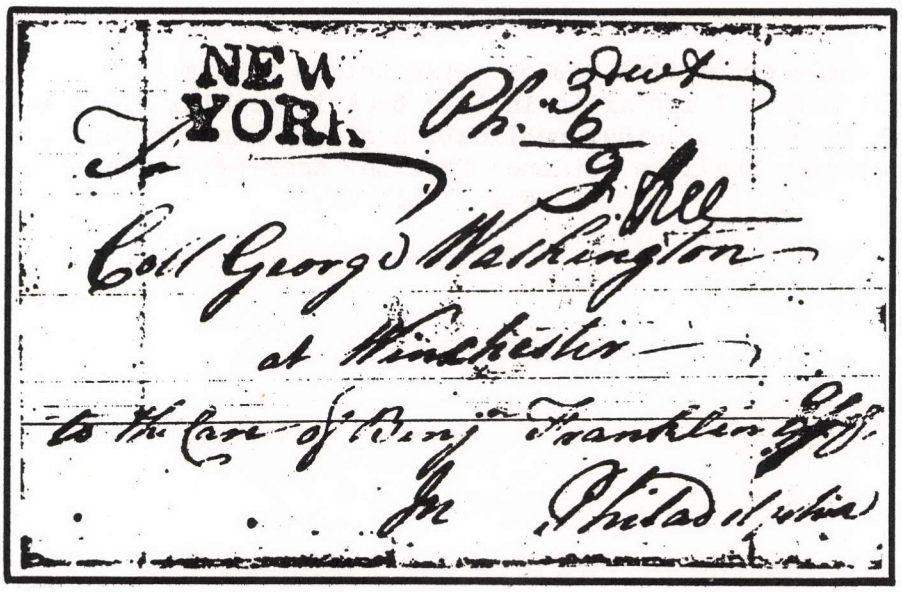
THE POSTED LETTER IN COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA



Alex L. ter Braake, Coordinator

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FOREWORD

The United States of America is now celebrating the bicentennial of its birth as a nation. It is with great pride that the American Philatelic Research Library participates in this historic occasion by presenting to the American people this volume - "The Posted Letter in Colonial and Revolutionary America", researched and written by Alex L. ter Braake and his associates.

Communication is a prime factor in welding people together in a common cause. It was due to the ability of the Colonists to communicate with each other through any available means-by letter, by word of mouth, by messenger, by book, by pamphlet, by carrier-that they were able to instill in the minds and hearts of the people not only the desire for freedom but a united determination to obtain that freedom. Here is the fascinating story of the colonial and revolutionary post which played such a vital role in uniting a people. To historians, to philatelists and to all Americans it presents a drama of everlasting value.

I wish to express the deepest appreciation to Alex L. ter Braake and his co-workers for their years of research now reduced to the written word and to Daniel W. Vooys and James M. Chemi, my fellow committeemen, whose support and cooperation not only encouraged the authors but made possible the publication of this epic of American colonial life.

George M. Martin
President
American Philatelic Research Library

February 1975

Acknowledgements.

This book is the result of the cooperative effort of many, of researchers, cover collectors, postal history students and writers, of archivists and librarians, of photographers, cartographers and copying machine operators, of printers and book binders, and last but not least of American Philatelic Research Library officials, who functioned as consultants, critics and publishers. As the coordinator of this Project I am deeply indebted to those men and women.

There is good reason for listing the names of a few who have deserved a special owed of appreciation. A trio, who among the several who enthusiastically accepted a research or writing assignment, unfortunately were unable to finish the task they had begun, because they were called away to follow a higher destiny.

Mrs. Edith Faulstich was ready to lend her talent and experience to a study of the letter post during the French and Indian War when poor health and an untimely demise prevented her from doing what she had in mind. However, several of the following pages carry her name, since she made copies available to the Project of numerous items from her magnificent colonial collections. They have been used to illustrate some of this book's Chapters.

Robert Overing of Chapin, S.C. was a retired member of the U.S. Post Office staff when he volunteered to do research work for this Project. With great enthusiasm and initiative he searched the archives which opened their doors to him. His sudden death interrupted a flow of interesting historical details.

Delf Norona of Moundsville, W.Va. could not finish the study of the early eighteenth century postal maps drawn by Henry Moll, the results of which he had promised to write for this book. In April, 1975 his well-worn typewriter became idle for good.

The names of these dedicated postal historians are herewith permanently recorded as highly appreciated participants in this Research Project.

It is utterly impossible to mention all those who played a part in the completion of this volume. There are the authors of the several Chapters whose names appear beneath the titles of their contributions. The coordinator's gratitude for their collaboration includes his appreciation for their willingness to accept his blue-pencil decisions which had to be made mainly to prevent duplication or to keep the length of the writings within their scheduled dimensions.

A number of co-workers in the field of research have earned a special feather in their caps for outstanding performances. They are: Miss Edith R. Doane of East Orange, N.J., James T. Bose of Annapolis, Mr., Dr. J.D.Edens of Athens, Ga., Guy Prescott of Los Angeles, Cal., Joseph C.

Rose of Washington, D.C. and Clyde Smith of Raleigh, N.C.

Several collectors of pre-1790 postal history material have made copies of their precious items available for the illustration of this volume for which they have earned my sincere appreciation. Outstanding among them for the size or the historic value of their contributions are: Joseph Carson heirs, Edw. J. Creigh, Bruce Hazelton, H.R.Lounsbery, Robsom Lowe, C.D.McFadden, E.N.Sampson, Robert A.Siegel, John H. Smith, Henry Welch, and one collector who preferred to remain anonymous.

Of immeasurable historic value are the hundreds of covers in copyform which have been made available to this Project by the national and foreign archives, who without exception agreed to do so, and gave permission to use them as illustrative material in this book. Their names have been recorded in the cutlines to the figures. Without these illustrations the present volume would never have become a reality, with them they have made it possible to present the results of this postal history study in a form which had never been tried before.

With an expression of warm gratitude the contributing Archives and Libraries are listed here:

National Archives, Washington, D.C.
Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Public Archives, Ottawa, Can.
Government Archives, the Hague, The Netherlands.
Riksmuseet, Stockholm, Sweden.
Public Record Office, London, England.
British Museum, London, England.

State Archives of:
- Maryland (Hall of Records): Executive Papers, Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly.
- New York: Documents related to the Colonial Period.
- North Carolina: Colonial Records, John G. Blount Papers.
- Pennsylvania: Provincial Council Records, Baynton, Wharton and Morgan Papers.
- Rhose Island: Colonial Records.
- Virginia: Committee of Correspondence Papers, Alexander Spotswood Papers.

Libraries of:
- Brown University: John Carter Brown Library.
- Duke University: William R. Perkins Library: Clopton, Telfair, Tilghman and Purviance-Countney Papers.
- University of Michigan: William L. Clements Library: U.S. Congress, U.S. Presidents Papers and Miscellaneous Manuscripts.
- Princeton University: De Coppet Collection.
- University of South Carolina: South Caroliniana Library: Margaret Colleton and Manigault Collections.
- University of Virginia: James Hunter, McGregor and Graham Family Papers.
- Yale University: Sterling Memorial Library: Trumbull and Griswold Collections.

William and Mary College: Earl Gregg Swem Library: Tucker-Coleman Collection.
New Brunswick Theological Seminary: Gardner A. Sage Library.
Colonial Williamsburg Foundation: John Norton & Sons Papers.
Henry E. Huntington Library: Loudoun, Brock, A.B., H.M. and B.L.Collections.
New York Public Library: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, Manuscripts and Archives Division.
Kanawha County Public Library, West Virginia.

Historical Societies:

American Jewish: Aaron Lopez and Bilbah A.Franks Collections .
Antiquarian: Curwin, Aaron Burr, Graigie and Isaiah Thomas Papers.
Connecticut: Trumbull, Chaplin and Knox Papers.
Maryland: Gilmore and Sharpe Papers.
Massachusetts: Sedgewick, Knox, Meshech Weare and Witmore Papers.
Newport: Aaron Lopez Collection.
New York: Richard Varrick Papers.
Pennsylvania:Hollingsworth Papers.
Portsmouth.
Philosophical: Benjamin Franklin and Ebenezer Hazard Papers.
Rhode Island: Enos Hitchcock Collection.
South Carolina: Henry Laurens Papers.

A special tribute goes to Dr. Herbert Kagen of Charleston, W. Va., who assisted in editorial chores and stood prepared to take over the coordinator's task should the need occur.

This book would never have been written without the encouragement of my devoted wife, who suffered many hours of loneliness due to my activities on behalf of this Project.

Charleston, W.Va. Spring, 1975.

Alex.L.ter Braake
Coordinator Postal
History Project
Colonial America.

Table of Contents

Foreword
Acknowledgements
Table of Contents

Part I.

A. Introduction..... Alex.L.ter Braake
B. The Post Office and its Master.. id.
C. The Grand Line of Post..... id.
D. Postage Rate in Colonial and Revolutionary America..... id.
E. American Ship Letters..... id.
F. Trans-Atlantic Mail in Colonial and Revolutionary Days..... id.
G. The French Transatlantic Packet Service 1783 - 1788.... Marc W. Martin
H. William Giles Goddard..... Alvin R. Kantor
I. Currency used for Postage Payment..... Eric P. Newman
J. An Express from Lexington..... Robert L. Berthelson
K. Andrew Hamilton, the Father of the American Post..... Alex.L.ter Braake
L. Colonial Williamsburg..... id.
M. Postally, Benjamin Franklin..... Alvin R. Kantor
N. The Early Letter Post of Charlestown, S.C. ..... Alex.L.ter Braake and Nicholas J.Johnson, M.D.
O. Maryland Colonial Post..... Rev. Homer D. Kendall
P. The Posts in Canada to 1776..... Susan M. McDonald
Q. Florida Colonial Mail..... Charles F. Meroni
R. Committee of Correspondence..... Alex.L.ter Braake
S. Piscataway - Piscataqua..... id.
T. The Fate of New York in 1776.... id.
U. An Early American Army Post Office Letter..... id.
V. The American Bottom..... id.
W. Epilogue..... id.

Part II.

Colonial and Pre-Constitutional Town Markings..... Alex.L.ter Braake
Preface..... id.
Town Markings on Cover Explanatory Notes..... id.

Bibliography
Index
Erratum..... Alex.L.ter Braake

The American Revolution, the rebellious act of forcefully substituting the British administration by a truly national government, started years before the signing of the Declaration of Independence in the fifty-odd little post offices, located between the Province of Maine in the north and Williamsburg in the south.

A. Introduction.

Alex.L. ter Braake

An accidental discovery of a fascinating collection of eighteenth century letters in the archives of the Newport (R.I.) Historical Society was the primer for an almost explosive postal history research activity, which led to the unearthing of more and more interesting material of a pre-1790 vintage. The rapidly approaching date for the national bicentennial celebration of the country's most important historic event, the signing of the Declaration of Independence, gave impetus to the gradually spawning idea of using this growing accumulation of early American postal documentation for a written contribution by eophilatelists to the program of commemorative happenings in 1976. A quick probe of sentiments brought expressions of approval and support from the American Philatelic Society, the American Philatelic Research Library, and from knowledgeable researchers and writers in the field of postal history, an encouragement which made this writer decide to go ahead with his plans.

Within a reasonably short time a small army of collaborators was mobilized. Collectors of pre-statehood letters, covers and other postal documents made their valuable possessions available to the Project. Scores of research workers, volunteers and college students of history were recruited, some of the latter at a monetary compensation. They spent time and effort in locating study material in libraries and archives for copying. When the success of this operation was assured well-known postal historians and experienced writers were invited to give of their talent and time by expertly selecting and preparing these accumulated ingredients and by reproducing them in an attractive, well-illustrated, written form.

Earlier writers have recorded more or less extensively the development and operation of the postal systems which sprang up in early America, but few of them could show their readers the real substance of

their studies, the colonial and pre-1790 letter in its diversified form, with its markings, its endorsements, its ratings, and other interesting details. Recently developed reproduction methods and equipment have widely opened the gates to valuable old letter collections preserved in many archives, and thereby enabled the postal history writer to show his readers in picture-form the practical application of the various postal laws and regulations, the office manipulations and transportation methods which had formed the substance of earlier publications. It is the purpose of these writings to present the story of the early American postal service in the form of a number of profusely illustrated Chapters.

It is obvious that not every written communication that has survived the effect of decaying agents during two or more centuries is of value for a project such as this. Members of the searching team were obliged carefully to cull the chaff form the wheat. Modern technology again helped to lighten their task. Many old letter collections now have been micro-filmed. Through the facilities of the national inter-library loan system such documents can be viewed at one's leisure and specific items selected and ordered for copying, either by photographic or xerographic methods.

Within one year the Project's documentation center became the depository of hundreds of copies of pre-1790 letters, covers, newspaper and magazine articles, and other manuscripts and printed matter, which could be of help to those who had accepted a writing assignment. Each piece of postal evidence was registered, systematically filed (figure A-1), and made available to those writers for their study and eventually for illustrating the fruits of their efforts. At the completion of their tasks the entire collection of postal history material will become available for study to all non-participating postal historians (a-1) through the facilities of the American Philatelic Research Library at State College, Pa., where the accumulated material will find a permanent abode.

It should be pointed out that it never was the purpose of this Project to produce a document that could be called "the" postal history of early America. Time, opportunity, and talent were lacking to undertake such a monumental and almost boundless task. Moreover some specialists of certain story-segments were tied to other commitments and therefore unable to accept an assignment under the Project. Though the substance of these articles is of a specialized nature an effort has been made to write it in a form that will be of interest to the general reader as well as to the student of American postal history.

This publication consists of illustrated Chapters, written by a number of authors, each under his or her own name and tries to depict some of the most important and interesting aspects of the rather primitive, but gradually developing postal services during America's pre-1790 years. In the second part the reader will find a pictorial assortment of town markings, all on cover, which were in use during that period. Only a few are missing. Several markings have been

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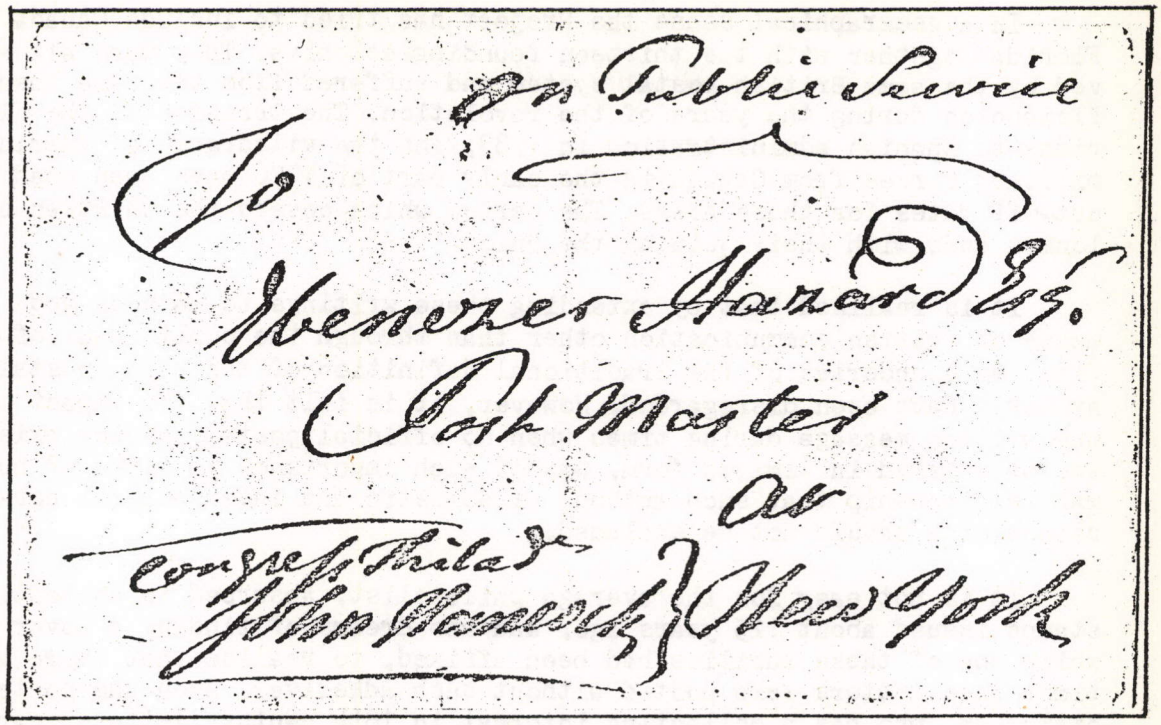
(a-1) Future postal history writers while using this material will have to heed the provisions under which each individual item has been made available to this Project.



Am. Postal History	File No. PA - PH - 7/9/1776
cover ☒ whole letter ☒ class. PRE-1790 subcl. CONGRESSIONAL POST from PHILADELPHIA date JULY 9, 1776 via date via date to NEW YORK date other docmt.	Markings: type, size, color On Public Service Congress Philada John Hancock details over
Original owned by: AM. PHILOSOPHICAL SOC. PHILADELPHIA	

depicted, both handstamped and in manuscript, which never before have been recorded.

In a geographical sense the Project has tried to include Canada and Florida together with the thirteen founding colonies. They were all served by the same British postal system and suffered from the same insufficiencies during the years of the revolution. The transfer of the Floridas to Spanish administration in 1783, and the withdrawal of American military forces from Canada in the early part of 1776 have been used as cut-off dates for those areas. The period which covers the thirteen colonies ends with their joining the Union.

It is realized that by extending these writings to methods and means of written communication other than through the public post office the bounderies of the traditional definition of the term "postal history" have been disregarded. However, it is felt that the impact of the written message during times when no official postal service existed, or existed in limited form, was of such importance in terms of human relationship that such methods of domestic and international correspondence should not be excluded.

It is not easy for the average philatelist, absorbed in collecting stamps issued about 125 years ago, and who dreams of finding a cover to which one of those rarities had been affixed, to realize that there were times when letters were posted without such adhesives. Even the postal historian, who has a collecting interest in 18th century letters, carrying handstamped and handwritten postal markings on their covers, will be hesitant to consider written messages lacking any outside evidence having been processed by a postmaster material to be worth his attention.

When Almighty God created man, he gave him a voice to speak with and an ear to listen with, and thereby provided him with means to communicate with other human beings. As soon as man's desire developed to exchange thoughts and plans and experiences with individuals outside the reach of his voice the need was born for verbal messages carried by a third person. When such a method of communication did not meet his requirements any longer he started reducing his words to writing. At that time the letter came into being, but not without an intermediary to carry and deliver it.

The methods and means by which such written messages were transported and delivered form the subject of a postal historian's research and study. Moreover he is anxious to acquire for his personal collection pieces of evidence to substantiate the results of his work.

A letter which, according to Holy Writ, was penned by Mordecai "in king Ahasuerus' name ... and sent ... by posts on horse-back, and riders on mules, camels, and young dromedaries ..." most certainly would be classified as collectible material by any student of the postal past, just as much as the first letter sent from Manhattan to the Netherlands in 1628, written by the Reverend Jonas Michaelius (see figure F-2). There is no reason to consider the correspondance of the common American colonist and its processing of lesser importance and to exclude such let-

ters from a postal historian's studies, though they carried no postal markings.

In early days regular occasions for sending letters, at fixed intervals, did not exist and an American settler often had to postpone his letter writing until an opportunity for sending it off presented itself. A typical example of such a chance occurance has been recorded in the journal of a Dutch traveling minister, who in 1679 visited plantations in north-eastern Maryland. He wrote:

> "While we were crossing the Sasafras river, we saw a small English ship lying there, which they told me would leave about the English Christmas. We now learned from Mr. Moll that he was going to write by her, and was willing if we wrote, to allow our letters go to London under cover of his. We determined, therefore, not to permit the opportunity to pass by of writing home." (a-2)

Hundreds of letters have been preserved, written by American captains who sailed their brigs and sloops from port to port in the West Indies, loaded with merchandise, which they tried to sell, or barter for wares elsewhere needed, and reported their success of failure to their principals at home. They relied for the conveyance of their correspondence on occasional home-bound vessels which they met in faraway harbors. Many such letters have an interesting story to tell about a means of communication yet uncoordinated.

Though all libraries and archives, which opened their facilities to the Project's researchers, responded in the most cooperative manner when requests were made for copies of selected items, a number of these institutions gave permission to use the copies for illustrating the following Chapters under the provision that a fee be paid for the publication of this document. In some cases the size of these charges was unacceptably high. Fortunately practically all the archives' administrators were willing to make an exception when they better understood the purpose of this study program, i.e. that the Project's results would be published as a contribution to the national bicentennial celebration in 1976, and that no-one on the researching and writing teams would receive a remuneration in any form, including copyrights. As a result of these explanations the publication fees were drastically reduced.

When trying to interpret the available information regarding the early history of the American post one has to be extremely careful. Early printed documentation is not always entirely reliable and can easily lead to erroneous conclusions. Particularly the more popular sources of such information, though often helpful, have to be used

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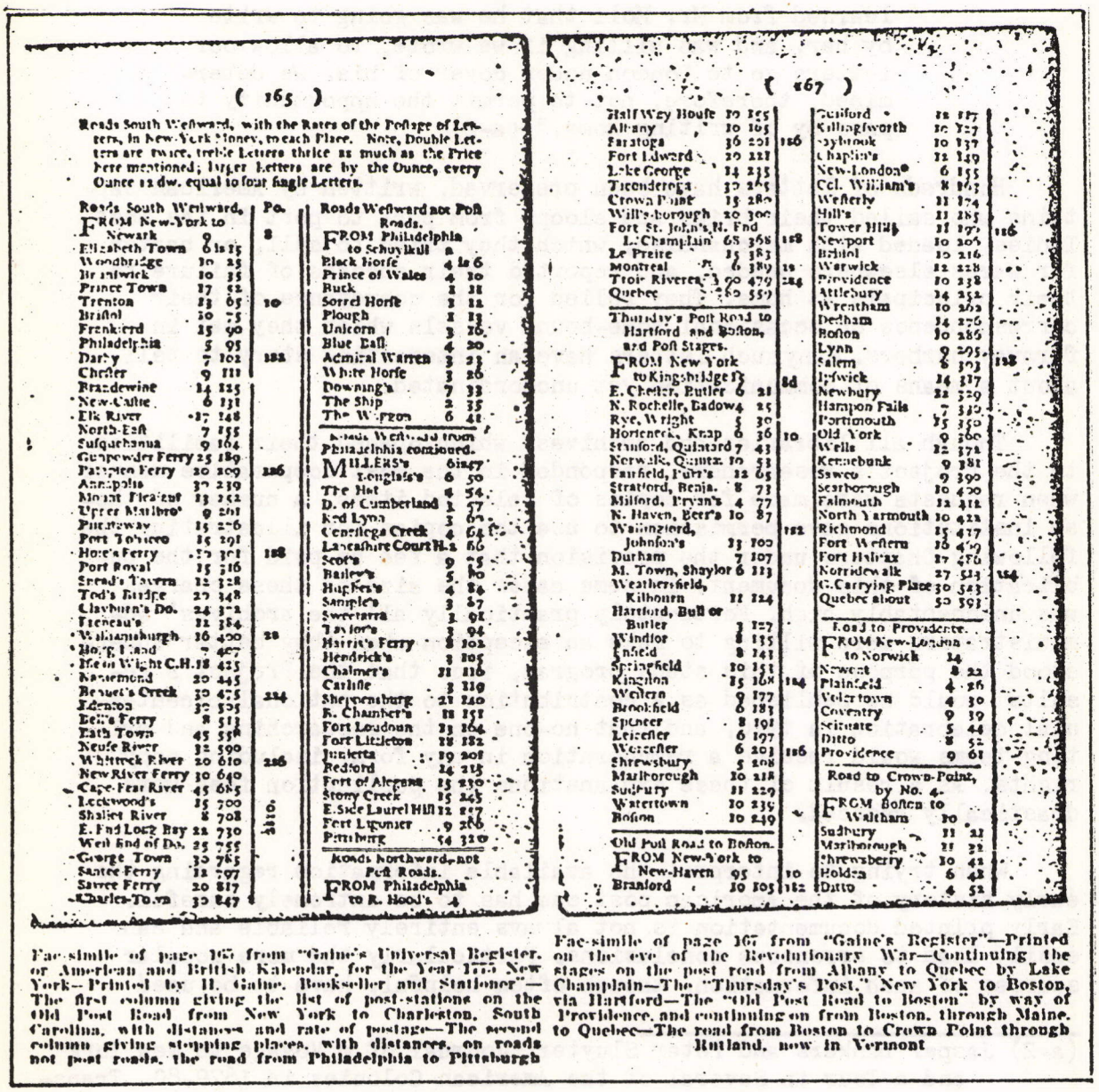
(a-2) Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter: Journal of a Voyage to New York and a Tour in Several of the American Colonies in 1679-80. Translated from the Dutch version. (Brooklyn, 1867). p. 224.

with critical reserve.

For example Gaine's Register, or "American and British Kalendar for the Year 1775", printed by H. Gaine, Bookseller and Stationer, on page 167 presents its readers with a detailed list of 38 stages, on the post road from New York to Quebec, the mileage from stage to stage, and of importance to the postal historian the prevailing postal rates for the several distances. The described route follows the old Boston road via New London and Providence, then further northward parallel to the coastline until Falmouth (presnt-day Portland). From there the route goes through the valley of the Kennebunk River basin and to Quebec, along the Chaudière River (figures A-2 and -3).



(165)

Roads South Westward, with the Rates of the Postage of Letters, in New-York Money, to each Place. Note, Double Letters are twice, treble Letters thrice as much as the Price here mentioned; Paper Letters are by the Ounce, every Ounce 12 dw. equal to four Single Letters.

Roads South Westward, FROM New-York to		Po.
Newark	9	8
Elizabeth Town	6 to 15	
Woodbridge	10 25	
Brunswick	10 35	
Prince Town	17 52	
Trenton	23 65	10
Bristol	10 75	
Frankford	15 90	
Philadelphia	5 95	
Darby	7 102	122
Chester	9 111	
Brandewine	14 125	
New-Castle	6 131	
Elk River	17 148	
North-East	7 155	
Susquehanna	9 164	
Gunpowder Ferry	25 189	
Patapsco Ferry	20 209	126
Annapolis	30 239	
Mount Pleasant	13 252	
Upper Marlbro'	9 261	
Piscataway	15 276	
Port Tobacco	15 291	
Hoe's Ferry	10 301	128
Port Royal	15 316	
Snead's Tavern	12 328	
Tod's Bridge	20 348	
Clayburn's Do.	24 372	
Fraeau's	12 384	
Williamsburgh	16 400	28
Hog Island	7 407	
Isle of Wight C.H.	18 425	
Nansemond	20 445	
Bennet's Creek	30 475	224
Edenton	30 505	
Bell's Ferry	8 513	
Bath Town	45 558	
Neuse River	32 590	
Whitrock River	20 610	226
New River Ferry	30 640	
Cape-Fear River	45 685	
Lockwood's	15 700	
Shallot River	8 708	
E. End Long Bay	22 730	
West End of Do.	25 755	
George Town	30 785	
Santee Ferry	12 797	
Sawee Ferry	20 817	
Charles-Town	30 847	

Roads Westward not Post Roads. FROM Philadelphia to Schuylkill	8	
Black Horse	4 to 6	
Prince of Wales	4 10	
Buck	2 12	
Sorrel Horse	2 14	
Plough	2 16	
Unicorn	3 19	
Blue Ball	4 20	
Admiral Warren	3 23	
White Horse	3 26	
Downing's	7 33	
The Ship	2 35	
The Wagon	6 41	
Roads Westward from Philadelphia continued. MILLER'S	6 to 47	
Longlois's	6 50	
The Hot	4 54	
D. of Cumberland	3 57	
Red Lyon	3 60	
Centellega Creek	4 64	
Lancashire Court H.	2 66	
Scot's	9 75	
Bailey's	5 80	
Hughes's	4 84	
Sample's	3 87	
Sweetarra	3 91	
Taylor's	3 94	
Harris's Ferry	8 102	
Hendrick's	3 105	
Chalmer's	11 116	
Carlile	3 119	
Shepherdsburg	21 140	
R. Chamber's	18 158	
Fort Loudoun	23 164	
Fort Littleton	18 182	
Juniatta	19 201	
Redford	14 215	
Fort of Alegana	15 230	
Stony Creek	15 245	
E. Side Laurel Hill	12 257	
Fort Ligonier	9 266	
Pittsburg	54 320	
Roads northward—not Post Roads. FROM Philadelphia to R. Hood's	4	

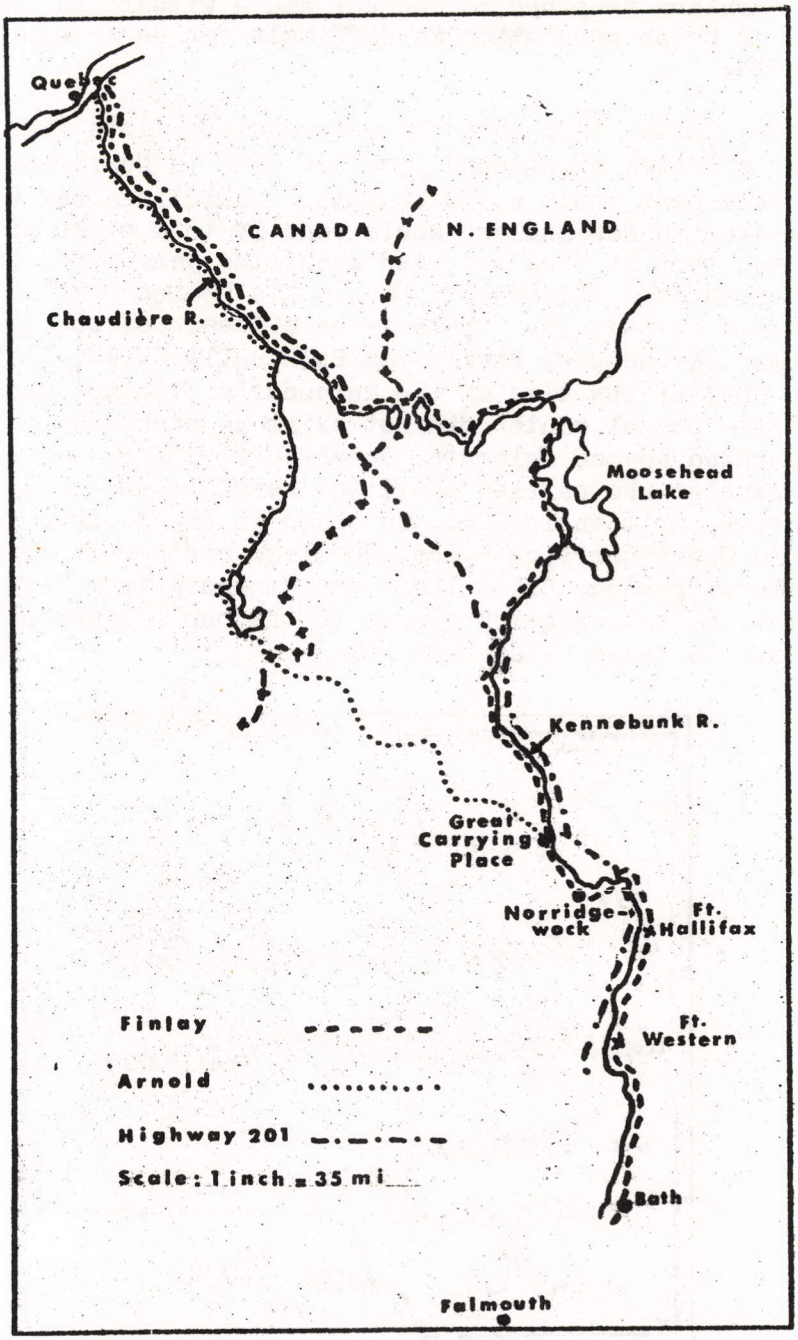
(167)

Half Way House	10	155		Guilford	12 187
Albany	10	165		Killingsworth	10 197
Saratoga	36	201	126	Saybrook	10 137
Fort Edward	20	221		Chaplin's	12 149
Lake George	14	235		New-London	6 155
Ticonderoga	30	265		Col. William's	8 163
Crown Point	15	280		Westerly	11 174
Willsborough	20	300		Hill's	11 185
Fort St. John's, R. End				Tower Hill	11 196
L. Champlain	65	365	128	Newport	10 206
Le Preire	15	383		Bristol	10 216
Montreal	6	389	19	Warwick	12 228
Trois Rivieres	90	479	284	Providence	10 238
Quebec	80	559		Attlebury	14 252
Thursday's Post Road to Hartford and Boston, and Post Stages. FROM New York to Kingsbridge				Wrentham	10 262
				Dedham	14 276
				Boston	10 286
			8d	Lynn	9 295
E. Chester, Butler	6	21		Salem	8 303
N. Rochelle, Badow	4	25		Ipswich	14 317
Rye, Wright	5	30		Newbury	12 329
Horseneck, Knap	6	36	10	Hampton Falls	7 336
Stamford, Quintard	7	43		Portsmouth	15 350
Norwalk, Quintz	10	53		Old York	9 360
Fairfield, Burr's	12	65		Wells	12 372
Stratford, Benja.	8	73		Kennebunk	9 381
Milford, Bryan's	4	77		Sawco	9 390
N. Haven, Beer's	10	87		Scarborough	10 400
Wallingford, Johnson's	13	100	122	Falmouth	12 412
Durham	7	107		North Yarmouth	10 422
M. Town, Shaylor	6	113		Richmond	15 437
Weathersfield, Kilbourn	11	124		Fort Western	16 459
Hartford, Bull or Butler	3	127		Fort Halifax	27 486
Windsor	8	135		Norridewalk	27 513
Enfield	8	143		G. Carrying Place	30 543
Springfield	10	153		Quebec about	50 593
Kingston	15	168	124	Road to Providence. FROM New-London to Norwich	24	
Western	9	177		Newent	8 22
Brookfield	6	183		Plainfield	4 26
Spencer	8	191		Voluntown	4 30
Leicester	6	197		Coventry	9 39
Worcester	6	203	126	Scituate	5 44
Shrewsbury	5	208		Ditto	8 52
Marlborough	10	218		Providence	9 61
Sudbury	11	229		Road to Crown-Point, by No. 4. FROM Boston to Waltham	10	
Watertown	10	239		Sudbury	11 21
Boston	10	249		Marlborough	11 32
Old Post Road to Boston. FROM New-York to New-Haven	95		10	Shrewsberry	10 42
Branford	10	105	122	Holden	6 48
				Ditto	4 52

Fac-simile of page 165 from "Gaine's Universal Register, or American and British Kalendar, for the Year 1775 New York—Printed by H. Gaine, Bookseller and Stationer"—The first column giving the list of post-stations on the Old Post Road from New York to Charleston, South Carolina, with distances and rate of postage—The second column giving stopping places, with distances, on roads not post roads, the road from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh

Fac-simile of page 167 from "Gaine's Register"—Printed on the eve of the Revolutionary War—Continuing the stages on the post road from Albany to Quebec by Lake Champlain—The "Thursday's Post," New York to Boston, via Hartford—The "Old Post Road to Boston" by way of Providence, and continuing on from Boston, through Maine, to Quebec—The road from Boston to Crown Point through Rutland, now in Vermont

Figure A-2

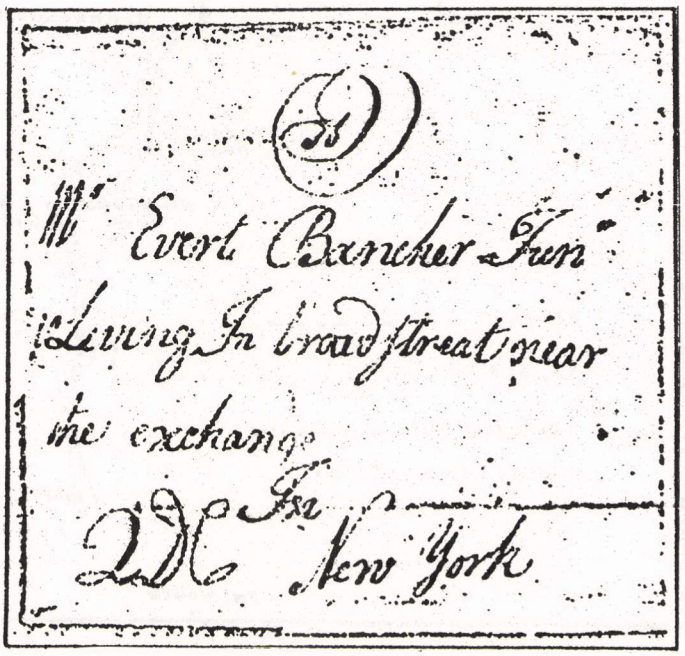


A-3

Route Falmouth-Quebec

At the time Gaine's Kalendar was printed Hugh Finlay, the royal surveyor and successor to Benjamin Franklin as deputy postmaster general, by order of his superiors in London, had just reconnoitered this 310 miles long route between Quebec and the Atlantic Ocean for the purpose of probing its postal merits and defaults. He described it in great detail in his Journal (a-3). One is impressed by the hardships Finlay and his companions had to endure during the expedition, by the physical barriers they had to conquer and a wilderness almost completely devoid of human population is difficult for us to appreciate in todays world.

Yet Mr. Gaine, less than two years later, lists figures which imply that a letter dispatched from New York to Norridswalk (Norridgewock) on this post route would be rated 2 shillings and 4 pence as if any postmaster in New England would send it to a place of which Finlay reports, that it "was deserted about the year 1750, not a vestige of it now remains." Sterling T. Dow in his "Maine Postal History" (1943) states on page 30: "There is no evidence of any postal activities on that (Kennebunk) river above Bath until 1794". It is almost a certainty that at the time of the Kalendar's printing the most northern part of this "postal route" did not exist as such, and that no post office operated beyond Falmouth. Occasionally there may have been a private traveler who carried a written message down or up the river. Such a letter, written in 1758, is shown in figure A-4. It originated in the Great Carrying Place, 30 miles north-west of what is present-day Norridgewock. Gaine lists the distance from here to Quebec as 50 miles, whereas a quick glance at the map (figure A-3) proves it to be closer to three times that far.



A-4. Great Carrying Place, Me. August 24, 1758. (Ex-Faulstich collection, Siegel Auction).

(a-3) Hugh Finlay: Journal September 13, 1773 - June 26, 1774. (Transcript Smithsonian Institution).

It may very well be that Benedict Arnold, when he planned his attack on Quebec, coming from the coast, was misled by Gaine's figures, because he "would learn that the distance between the mouth of the Kennebunk River and the city of Quebec was much greater than he supposed" (a-4). At any rate the nineteenth century was several years old before a road was opened connecting the Kennebunk and Chaudière Rivers (today's U.S. 201). It crosses the Canadian border at a point halfway between the routes Finlay and Arnold followed.

This example demonstrates that all that has been printed should not be accepted as the undeniable truth without considerable checking. The interpretation of what has been preserved in the form of ancient postal documentation similarly is often a hazardous undertaking, a field full of pitfalls.

A few years ago a valuable old cover of the late 17th century (figure A-5) was on exhibition. It carried the word "These", written near its lower edge. An interpretation of this word was given in a write-up by the exhibit's owner. It read: "The word signifies that the letter was carried safely in the sight of God". An article in one of this country's philatelic weeklies depicted a letter of similar vintage, mailed from the Netherlands to Scotland, which showed the word "Thes", penned directly under the address. Its author explained: "This word in script is 'Theos' (Thes), the Greek word for "God", and is an unusual talisman inscription which dates from antiquity."

After having seen and studied similar notations on more than a score of 17th and 18th century covers, written in more than one country and in more than one language, this writer has come to the conclusion that a more prosaic explanation must be given to the appearance of such words as "These", "This", "Thes" and "Deze" (Dutch). In his opinion the best clue to a more convincing interpretation is found on a cover which originated in Charles Town, South Carolina, with a London destination, and dated August 15, 1713 (figure A-6). The address reads:

"To Her Grace the Dutchesse
of Ormond
These most humbly present."

A second letter in the same correspondence carried a similar notation. Another version: "These to ... pr.sent" is depicted in Part II, figure RI 2.

So often the tooth of time has corrupted old customs, expressions, symbols and words, to the extent that only a remnant survives, which seems to have neither rhyme nor reason. The fact is that the words "These most humbly present" on the letter from Charles Town are such a remnant. They are the crippled translation of the original inscription in Latin: "Per has litteras praesentas", which reads in English: "By these present-day writings".

No pure-blood postal historian will pass up the chance to inter-

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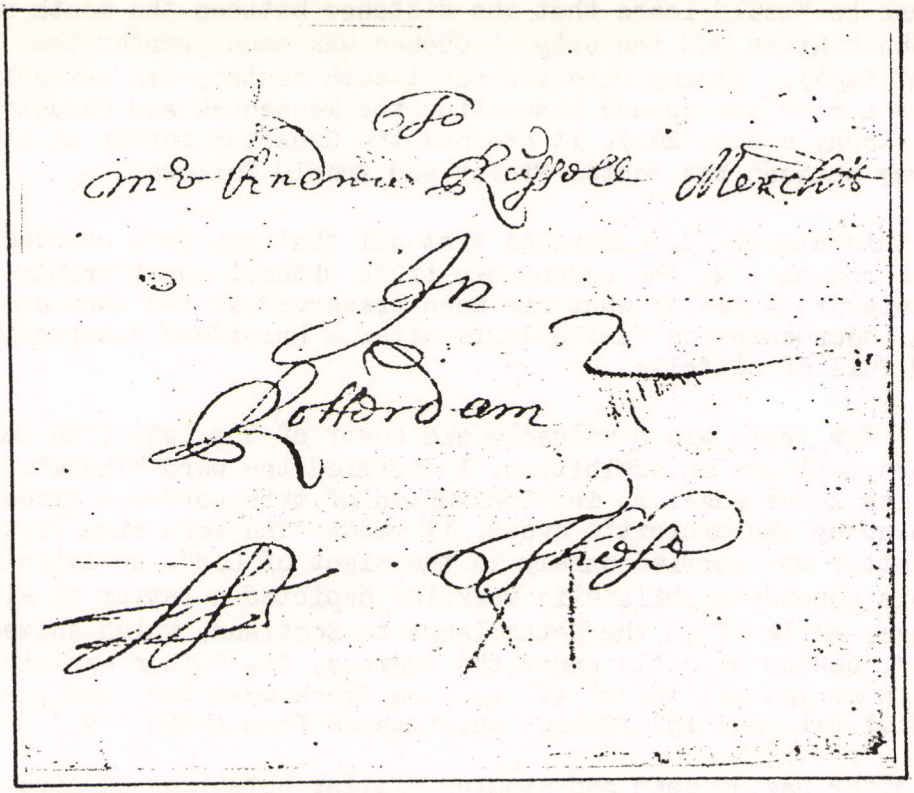
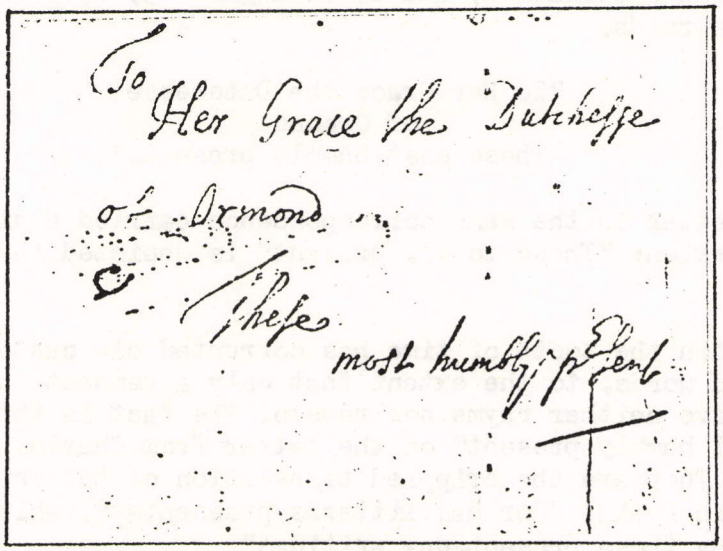
(a-4) John R. Alden: A History of the American Revolution (1969), p. 203.



A-5. Boston, January 28, 1690, to Rotterdam, via London, October 1, and Amsterdam. Prepaid (ff) 2 pence. Dutch rate XI in red crayon: 8 stuivers London-Amsterdam, 3 st. to Rotterdam. "These". (Siegel Auction).



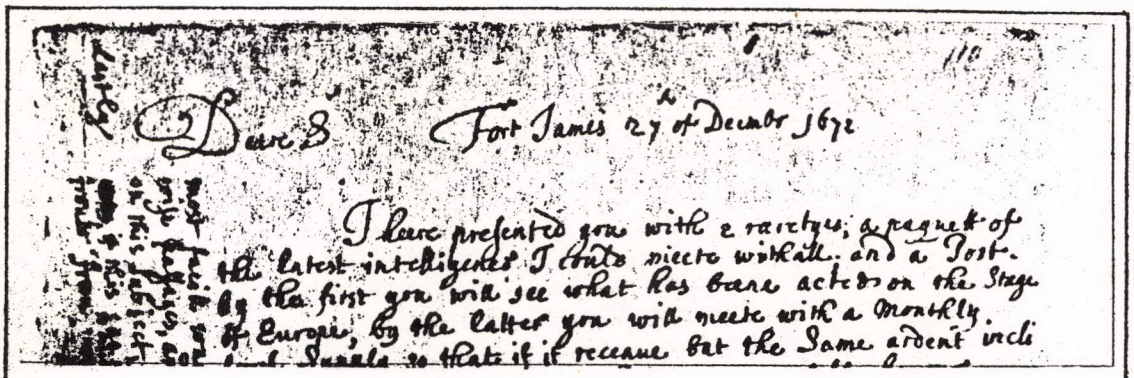
A-6. Charleston, S.C., August 15. 1713, to London. "These most humbly present." (South Caroliniana Library, Columbus).

pret the rate markings on his covers. At least he tries a hand at it. But if there ever was a territory where one has to look out for booby traps it is that of guessing a postmaster's reasoning in establishing the dues of his customers. Often several clues are missing which would be needed for the proper solution of these kinds of riddles. Not only does one have to be sure that the most obvious questions can be answered with sufficient certainty, such as the letter's origin, particularly if only the cover is available, its date, which set of rates did apply, but also whether it was a single letter, or whether it had held any enclosures. Among the most frustrating uncertainties to a postal historian is the possibility that the postmaster in charge of rating a letter did not apply any rate at all for a part of the route. Hugh Finlay in his inspection Journal of 1774 penned the following:

> "Nota. There's no inland postage charged by Mr. Thomson on the letters which he receives here (Savannah) to go by the Packet from Charles Town to Falmouth, and by the Post Master's Bill I perceive that there never has been inland postage charg'd from Charles Town, to this place, and I am apt to think none has ever been charg'd to and from St. Augustine." (a-5).

There is plenty of food for thought in Finlay's statement for the "expert" in rate interpretation. This author once fell victim to omissions of the Savannah postmaster.

If one scrutinizes the existing literature on American postal history one is surprised not only by the fact that errors have been made and are being made by otherwise meticulous researchers - which is only human - but by the repetition of such errors in later publications.



"I herewith present you with 2 rarities, a pacquet of ..."

(Woolley)

A-7

A striking example is the often quoted letter by New York's Governor Francis Lovelace which he wrote on the 27th of December, 1672,

(a-5) Covers which illustrate the Chapter on Colonial Florida prove that Finlay's pessimism regarding letters from St. Augustine is unjustified.

to his colleague in Connecticut regarding a letter post between the two colonies. The opening line of this historical document is shown in figure A-7, copied from the original, followed by the transcription as written by a postal historian eighty years ago (a-6). Throughout the years until 1973 one can follow the erroneous intrusion of the word "herewith" and the inobservance of the verb's past tense by numerous writers.

And thus while studying the "litteras praesentas" on pre-statehood postal history it may be well that the reader keep in mind the following plea by and old philosopher:

> "Who faulteth not liveth not; who mendeth faults is commended, the Printer has faulted a little; it may be the author oversighted more. Thy paine Reader is the least; then erre thou not most by misconstruing or sharpe censuring; least thou be more charitable than either of them hath been heedless." (a-7)

(a-6) Mary E. Woolley: The Early History of the Colonial Post-Office (1894), p. 5.

(a-7) Foulke Robertas: Revenue of the Gospel.

Postal service was a human activity at the dawn of history, and the progress of civilization through the ages can be measured by the successful development of systems of communication, among which postal service has played a major part.

Isaac Gregg (b-1)

B. The Postoffice and its Master.

Alex.L. ter Braake

The Massachusetts Bay Colony has the distinction of having been the first in colonial America to establish a post office. No evidence exists of an older one on the continent with the exception of the rudimentary efforts in this field by the Dutch West India Company.

The Massachusetts General Court Records of the 5th day of the 9th month, 1639 (b-2), disclose the following:

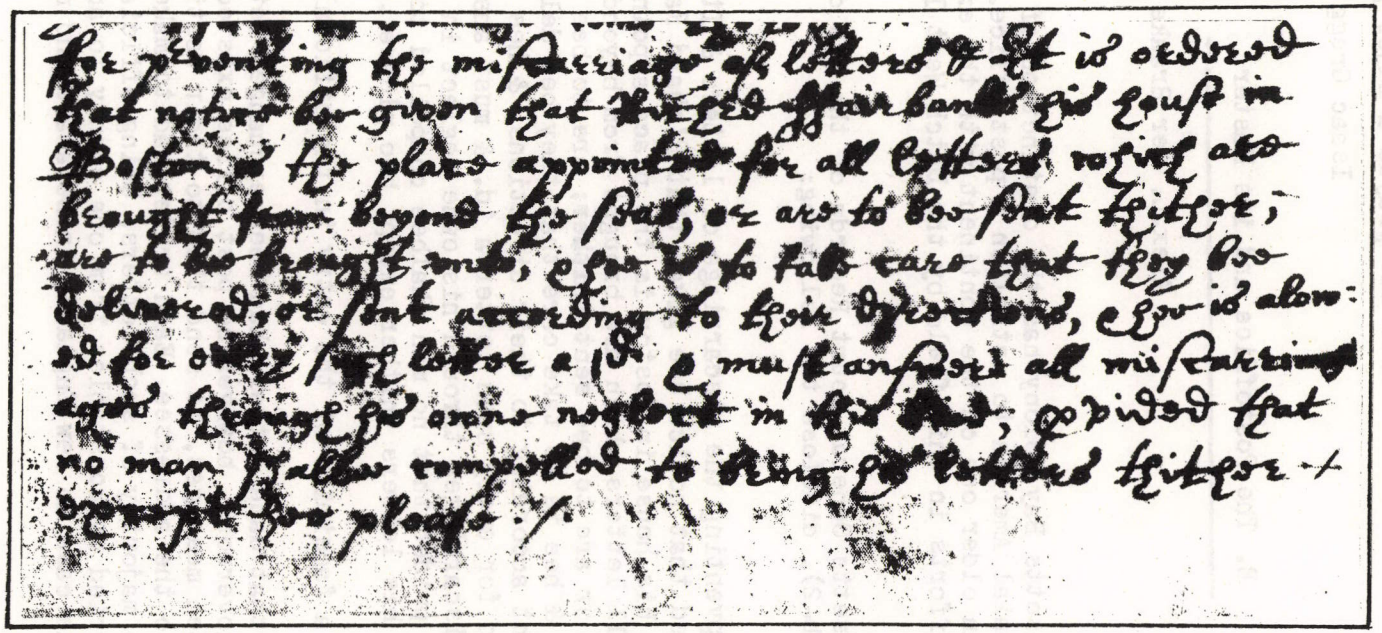
> "...
> For pventing the miscarriage of letters & It is ordered that notice bee given that R'chard Fairbanks his house in Boston is the place appointed for all letters which are brought from beyond the seas, or are to bee sent thither; are to bee brought vnto, & hee is to take care that they bee delivered, or sent according to their directions, & hee is alowed for every such letter a 1d. & must answere all miscarriages through his owne neglect in this kind; pvided that no man shalbee compelled to bring his letters thither except hee please ./."

Figure B-1 shows a facsimile of the entry in the official records.

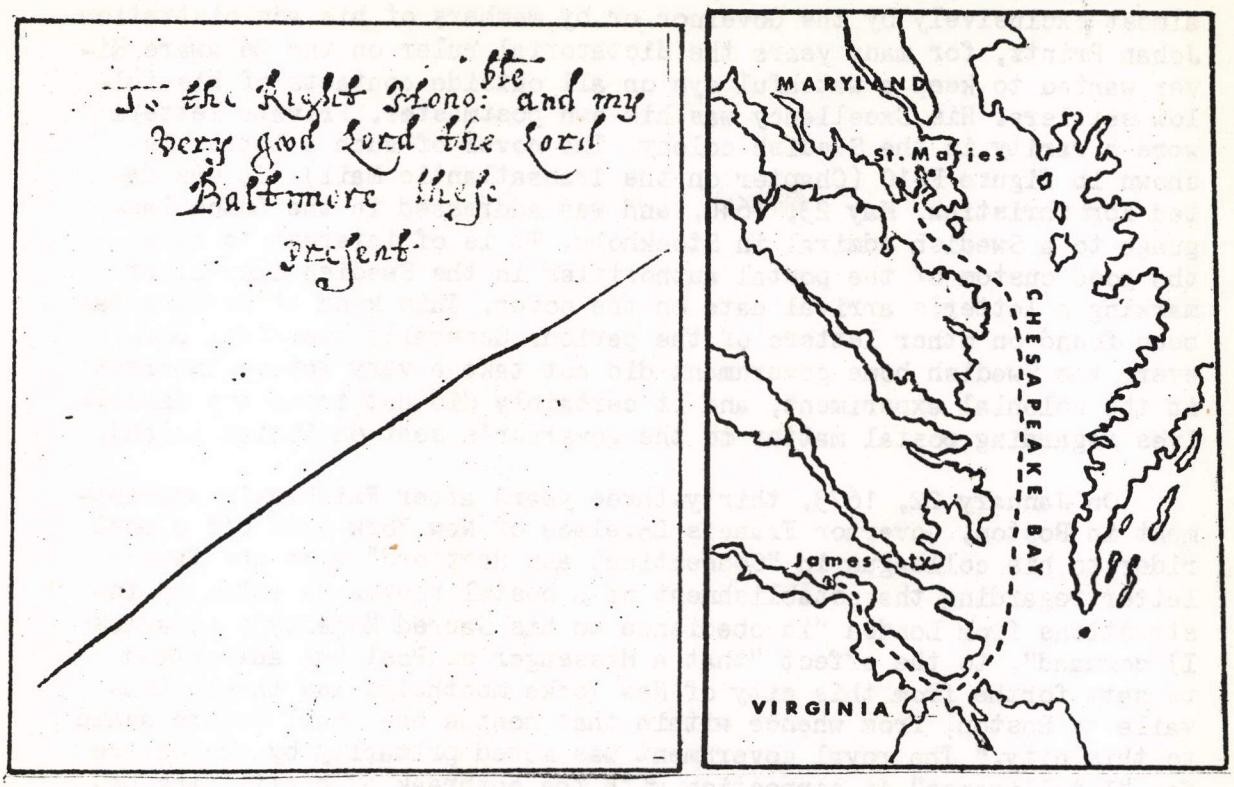
Previous to that date letters had been exchanged between colonists, mainly by their governors, however no post office existed yet to receive their written messages, to send them to their destination, or to deliver them to the addressee. Each writer had to make his own arrangements. The majority of such letters, being official communications, were carried by constables from one county to another. At least this was the case in New England, in Delaware and maybe in other colonies.

(b-1) Reprinted from Vol. XVI of Collier's Encyclopedia © 1950, by permission from P.F.Collier & Son Corp.

(b-2) Records of the Governor & Company of the Massachusetts Bay in New England. Vol. 1, 1628-1641, p. 281.



B-1. Massachusetts General Court order, dated September 5, 1639, by which a post office was established in Boston. (Massachusetts State Archives).



B-2. James City, Va., April 25, 1638, to St. Maries, Md. (Maryland Historical Society. Calvert Papers, MS. 174, #1-56).

An example of such early correspondence is depicted in figure B-2. The letter was dated "James Cittie, this 25th of April, 1638". and addressed to "The Right Hono.ble; and very good Lord, the Lord Baltimore". It was written by Richard Kemp, secretary to the Governor of Virginia. Land routes were not in existance in the ares, because wide estuaries separated the capitals of the wto colonies; Virginia and Maryland. Consequently the written contact between James City and St. Maries, respectively located on the James River and the Potomac was established by water.

The measure taken by the General Court in Massachusetts (b-3) was not initiated by a far-away government but instituted by an independent local legislature. In 1683 William Penn followed the example given by Massachusetts by authorizing Henry Waldy to open a Pennsylvania office where letters were dispatched to Delaware and Maryland.

Elsewhere, however, the early American post operated upon orders from the respective home governments. The Dutch in New Netherland were the first (See Chapter on the Transatlantic Mail), and the British, wherever they had a foothold, followed in their footsteps.

(b-3) Calvet M. Hahn: The First American "Post" Law. The Collectors Club Philatelist, Vol. 52, No.1, pp. 22-31.

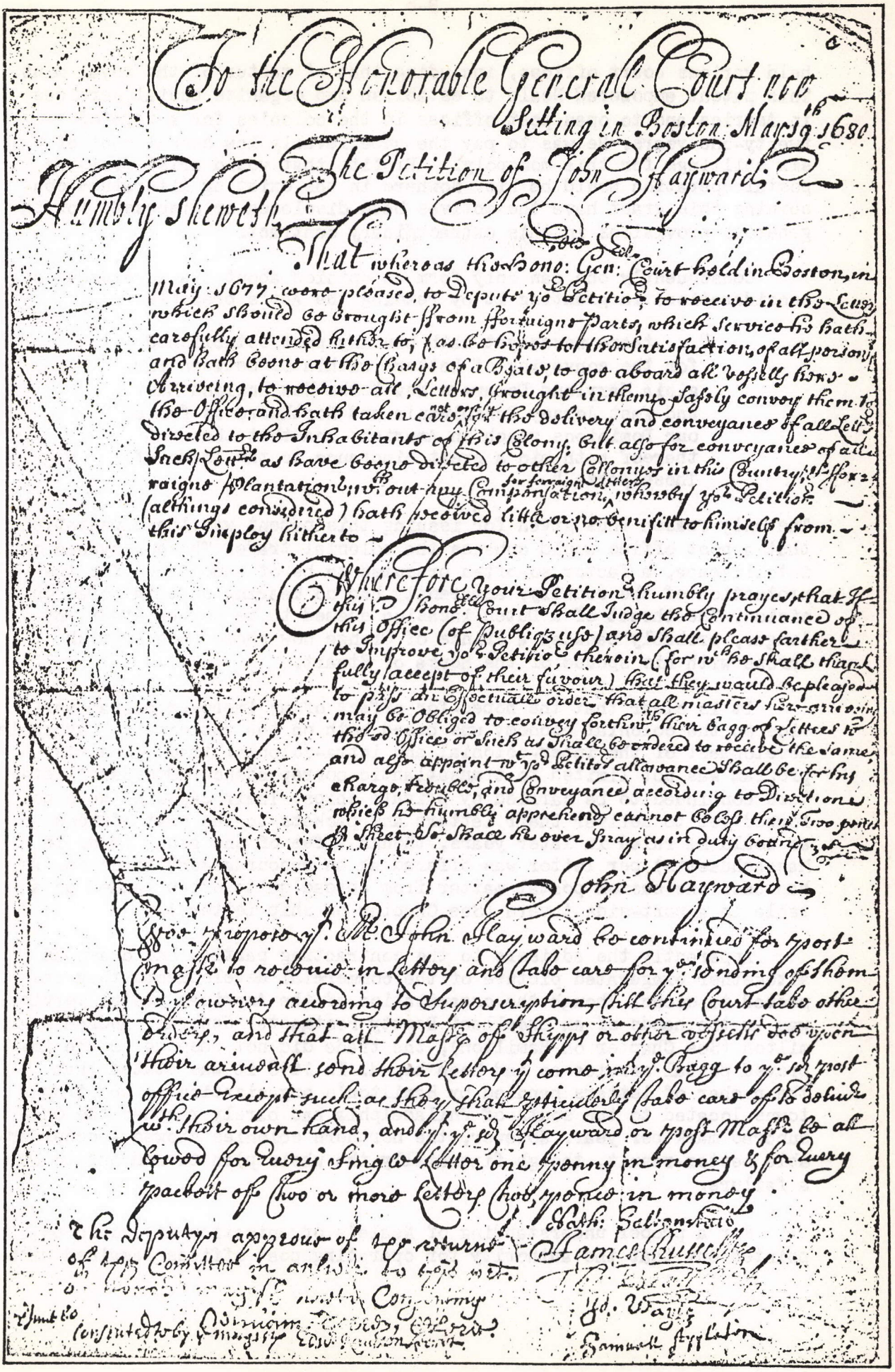
The Swedes in Nya Sverige (New Sweden) never came to the point of establishing a postal system, probably because letter writing was done almost exclusively by the Governor or by members of his administration. Johan Printz, for many years the dictatorial ruler on the Delaware River wanted to keep a watchful eye on all outside contacts of his fellow settlers. His Excellency was his own postmaster. Private letters were a rarity in the Swedish colony. The cover of such a letter is shown in figure F-10 (Chapter on the Transatlantic Mail). It was dated Fort Christina, May 23, 1640, and was addressed in the Dutch language to a Swedish Admiral in Stockholm. It is of interest to note the good custom of the postal authorities in the Swedish capital of marking a letter's arrival date on the cover. This kind of marking has been found on other letters of the period. Generally speaking, however, the Swedish home government did not take a very active interest in the colonial experiment, and it certainly did not issue any directives regarding postal matter to the governor's seat on Tinian Island.

On January 22, 1673, thirty-three years after Fairbank's appointment in Boston, Governor Francis Lovelace of New York sent off a post rider to his colleague in "Connecticut and Hartford" with the famous letter regarding the establishment of a postal route. He acted on instructions from London "in obedience to his Sacred Majesty's (Charles I) command", to the effect "that a Messenger of Post bee authorized to sett forthe from this city of New Yorke monthely, and thence travaile to Boston, from whence within that monthe hee shall return again to this city." The royal government was moved primarily by the desire for "Intelligence" in connection with the outbreak of hostilities between themselves and the United Provinces. The reoccupation of Manhattan by the Dutch in 1673 proved that the expressed need made sense, though in this case the order came too late.

Governor Lovelace's action, so soon discontinued, was not entirely fruitless. The General Court in Boston was sufficiently impressed both by his plea for a postal service and by the favorable reaction to it from local merchants. It appointed John Hayward postmaster with instructions "to take in and convey letters according to the direction." America's largest and most important city at the time took the initiative, as it had done in 1639. It opened a post office, this time not exclusively for handling mail "brought from beyond the sea", but also for letters in local intercourse. Hayward's contract remained in force for three years and when it had ran out he petitioned for an extension, dated May 19, 1680 (figure B-3).

From this very short review of postal arrangements during the 17th century it is evident that local initiative played a major role. In other cases, however, encouragement to organize postal services came from the parent government, particularly if and when such a policy served that government's purposes. Such actions were hardly ever motivated by a desire to accomodate the American colonist. Soon an element would dominate colonial postal policy completely foreign from principles prevailing in modern times. They became revenue-motivated.

Prior to that particular development a new era began when in Februar, 1692 a royal patent was granted to Thomas Neale, a Londoner who had



To the Honorable General Court now
Setting in Boston May 19th 1680

The Petition of John Hayward

Humbly sheweth

That whereas the Hono: Gen: Court held in Boston, in May 1677 were pleased to Depute yor Petitio^r to receive in the Letters which should be brought from forraigne Parts, which service he hath carefully attended hither to, (as he hopes to their Satisfaction, of all persons) and hath beene at the Charge of a Boate, to goe aboard all vessells here Arriveing, to receive all Letters brought in them, safely convey them to the Office, and hath taken care not only for the delivery and conveyance of all Letters directed to the Inhabitants of this Colony, but also for conveyance of all such Letters as have beene directed to other Collonyes in this Country, & forraigne Plantations, wth out any Compensation for forraigne Letters whereby yor Petitio^r (althings considered) hath received little or no benifitt to himself from this Imploy hitherto

Wherefore your Petition^r humbly prayes, that if this Hono^ble Court shall Judge the Continuance of this Office (of Publiqz use) and shall please farther to Improve yor Petitio^r therein (for wch he shall thankfully accept of their favour) that they would be pleased to pass an Effectuall order that all masters here arriveing may be Obliged to convey forth wth their bagg of Letters to the sd Office or such as shall be ordered to receive the same, and also appoint w^t yor Petitio^r allowance shall be for his charge, trouble, and Conveyance according to Direction which he humbly apprehends cannot be less then Two pence ye Sheet, so shall he ever pray as in duty bound

John Hayward

We propose y^t Mr John Hayward be continued for post Mast^r to receive in Letters and take care for ye sending of them by owners according to Superscription, till this Court take other orders, and that all Mast^rs of Shipps or other vessells doe upon their arriveall send their Letters y^t come in ye Bagg to ye sd post office except such as they shall particularly take care of to deliver wth their own hand, and y^t ye sd Hayward or post Mast^r be allowed for every single Letter one penny in money & for every packett of two or more Letters two pence in money

Nath: Saltonstall
James Russell
[illegible]
Jo. Wayte
Hamuell Appleton

The Deputys approve of the returns of the Committee in answer to the [illegible] [illegible] Consenting
[illegible]
Consented to by [illegible]

B-3. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

held various court offices, including that of master of the royal mint. This patent empowered Neale to establish and organize postal services in America and to open post offices in the colonies for a term of twenty-one years. He was to pay the unbelievably low annual rent of six shillings for this monopoly. Profits that would arise from the postal operation would be his. Nowhere in the existing literature concerning this grant have the motives been disclosed or discussed for the generous provisions in this extraordinary contract.

Consequently one can only form an opinion about the government's considerations in granting it by reading the Act's preamble:

> "... there never yet hath bin any post established for the conveying of Letters within or between Virginia Maryland Delaware New Yorke New England East and West Jersey Pensulvania and Northward as far as our Dominions reach in America; And that the want thereof hath bin a great hindrance to the Trade of Those parts."

The only reason thus given for issuing this patent was the expectation that a post office would enhance the colonial trade. The conveyance of intelligence, a factor so often presumed to be of importance for the protection of the country, apparently had no bearing on this royal decision. The threat of a Dutch invasion seemed to be non-existant any longer, probably because a Prince of Orange now shared the British throne with his spouse of the House of Stuart.

It is clear that the hoped-for effect of an improved postal service on the colonial economy was based both on the anticipated favorable development of the inter-colonial and intra-colonial trade. Neale's program was not limited to transatlantic correpondence. Overseas' letters continued to be carried by private ships. Their captains were not forced yet to deliver their letters and packets to the post offices as would be ruled in later years, though a fee of one penny ($\frac{1}{2}$ d. in Massachusetts) per letter was offered as an encouragement to do so. As had been the custom postal matter from abroad quite often landed on a table in a port-side tavern (See Chapter on Ship Letters).

Apparently the advisers to the contracting parties had drawn an altogether exagerated picture of the commercial developments they expected to occur. Though the organization of the American postal services was in the hands of an excellent Deputy Postmaster General, Andrew Hamilton (See Chapter on Hamilton), the trade did not respond to the improved postal service as had been hoped. In 1698 it was stated that the number of letters handled by Hamilton's organization to and from towns located to the south of Philadelphia had barely reached the one-hundred mark per year. However, the northern colonies showed a considerable better result, though financially the whole plan turned out to be a failure.

For a proper understanding of Neale's organization it should be pointed out that the authority for operating post offices remained with

the local governments. They enacted their own laws and regulations regarding the post, though they were required to submit such rules for approval to the Postmasters General in London. Local government independently established post roads and appointed postmasters.

One year after this postal experiment had come to an end colonial America became a participant in a world-wide British mail system which was based on the philosophy sharply in contrast with the principles of earlier days. A government monopoly of the postal services was created for Great Britain and Her Majesty's dominions, headed by a Postmaster General in London. His American deputy was to hold office in New York, with powers to open post offices and post roads, and to appoint post masters. This act, Queen Anne's Act, shifted heretofore existing local authority in postal matters to an office in the British capital. Moreover the enabling act in its preamble bluntly stated that the earnings of these centralized services would be used for:

> "... setting a Weekly Sum out of the revenue thereof, for the Service of the War, and other Her Majesties Occasions."

The parliamentary committee in the House of Commons, which prepared the bill, onFebruary 14, 1710/11 expressed this new principle in even more explicit terms:

> "... resolved that it is the opinion of this committee that, towards raising the supply granted to her Majesty her Majesty's revenues, both inland and foreign, to arise in the general letter office, or post office, or the office of Postmaster General, be increased ..."

The men in London had extravagant ideas regarding the capability of America's postal system to contribute regularly to the British war effort. However, the Treasury in London had to wait for Benjamin Franklin's masterhand to see the principle translated into actual transfers of hard cash to its coffers. That became a realty in 1761. Fifty years after the act was passed Franklin and his fellow deputy post master general, William Hunter, could remit the first revenue amounting to 494 pounds sterling to the British Post Office. (b-4)

The history of the American post office during the years immediately following the effective date of Queen Anne's act is surprisingly vague. This may have been due to the fact that it took a few years before the provisions of the new law became sufficiently known on this side of the ocean, but also because the people easily found ways to circumvent postal regulations whatever they were. Only Virginia raised its voice in protest. It came to a point where the House of Burgesses adopted its own law which prohibited Virginia's

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(b-4) Ruth Lapham Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), p. 70.

postmasters to apply the parliamentary decision and threatened those who did with stiff penalties. The assembly based its opposition on the theory that it was unlawful for the British government to assess taxes on people who were not given an opportunity to be heard and to speak up against tax burdens. That is what they called the new postal rates. Since Virginians were almost exclusively interested in overseas mail and the charge for such letters was raised from one penny to one shilling their defensive position, as distinguished from the luke-warm attitude that was prevailing elsewhere, becomes understandable. But Alexander Spotswood, the Governor, refused to go along with the Virginia legislature, and he upheld the royal law. However, this forthright position and other matters in which Spotswood held opinions differing from those of the Virginia people's representatives made him decide to give up his governorship.

The rules of the postal service established in 1711 by Parliament and reestablished in 1765 remained unchanged until a revolutionary wind began to blow through the American post offices in 1774 and 1775. William Giles Goddard, a hot-tempered, outspokenly anti-British, ex-postmaster, then publisher and printer of newspapers in Philadelphia and Baltimore, was responsible for the fundamental changes that were taking place.

Goddard used the gradually growing dissatisfaction with the British administration for his action. A popular spirit was growing which was hard to subdue. During a propaganda trip which brought him to the northern border of the Massachusetts Bay colony and as far south as Williamsburg Goddard explained to local officials his plans for a true "American Post Office". He particularly addressed the men who formed the Committees of Correspondence which had sprung up throughout the land. Practically everywhere that Goddard went he found an open ear for his ideas. As a result postmasterships were filled by the various local governments in defiance of the British law and its local defenders, including the ruling deputy postmaster General, John Foxcroft. Within a surprisingly few months, even before the Declaration of Independence was signed the century-old legal foundation of the American post office lost its foothold.

The provincial congresses, inexperienced in postal affairs as the majority of them were, assumed the responsibility for appointing men synpathetic to the anti-British movement to run the post offices (see the Chapter on William Goddard). A royal British prerogative was usurped by the representatives of the American people.

Soon thereafter, however, the future of the American Post Office was to be guided by the more sedate decisions of the Continental Congress and by those of the new Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin. Postal authority had made the full circle from Boston to Londen, and from there back to the American people. Since then the American post office was on its own as a part of the gradually growing and developing federal government.

For a proper understanding of the legal status of the postal

system in the colonies it is important to realize that:

a. in 1693 it was based on a patent of a somewhat monopolistic nature, issued by the crown to Thomas Neale;

b. during Queen Anne's reign and the following years it was based on an Act of Parliament, which clearly established the rights of the British crown to open post offices and post roads and to appoint postmasters for the processing and transporting of her Majesty's mail.

c. in 1775 and thereafter until October 18, 1782, it was based on the provisions related to the postal service in article IX, one of the Articles of Confederation.

All three monopolies, however, applied only to the posts of the official inter-colonial system and not to the local services within the borders of the individual provinces. As Winfield A.Hain stated in his "Notes on early Pennsylvania Postal History" (b-5):

> "... it was perfectly proper to send a letter from Reading to Philadelphia by Lewis Nicola's (private) post, but it was illegal to send a letter from Philadelphia to Boston by private post."

Consequently prior to 1775 there were Parliamentary post offices and postal routes, and at the same time intra-colonial postal establishments, privately operated or by the provincial governments. The Articles of Confederation upheld this principle:

> "The united states in congress assembled shall also have the sole right and power ... establishing and regulating postoffices from one state to another, throughout all the united states, and exacting postage on the papers passing thru' the same as may requisite to defray the expense of the said office ..." (b-6).

A fundamental change was brought about by the Ordinance of October 18, 1782. In March of that year a committee of delegates had reported to Congress about the basic regulations pertaining to the postal services which had been in effect in the past. Scattered as they were in numerous ordinances since July 26, 1775, it had "become necessary to revise the several regulations heretofore made relating to the Post Office, and reduce them to one act." (b-7)

But the Ordinance went much further than restating decisions that had been made in previous years. It resolved:

(b-5) American Philatelic Congress Book, No.14 (1948), p. 50.
(b-6) Passed by Congress on November 15, 1777; ratified and in force by March 1, 1781.
(b-7) Preamble to the Ordinance of October 18, 1782.

> "... that the Postmaster General of these United States ... and his deputy and deputies, thereunto by him sufficiently authorised, and his and their agents, post-riders, expresses and messengers respectively, and no other person whatsoever, shall have the receiving, taking up, ordering, despatching, sending post of with speed, carrying and delivering of any letters, packets or other despatches from any place within these United States for hire, reward, or other profit or advantage for receiving, carrying or delivering such letters or packets respectively."

Severe penalties would be imposed on persons presuming to do so. It left the door open for "private cross post riders that may be emploed by any citizens of these United States with the consent of the Postmaster General or his deputy, until a public rider can be established on such a cross road."

With this ordinance the fourth and final monopoly in America had become a fact, and its basic concept has never been changed since.

By Queen Anne's act a close connection was established between the American post and the London office, with New York as headquarters. Many elements of the British system were endorsed here, if not immediately, certainly during the years to come. Though conditions in the two countries differed considerably America profited from the postal experience the British had acquired. The main difference between the two was of course the subordinate position of the American deputy postmasters general, who received their instructions from the general office in London and reported to it. The great distance and the resulting slow mail services across the Atlantic were a disadvantage which continuously hampered decision making on this side of the ocean.

From 1711 to November 23, 1721, under the new law, John Hamilton, Andrew's son, continued to be America's postmaster general. He had served in that capacity during the last years of the Neale patent. Neither he nor his successor, John Loyd, made a lasting impression on the history of this country's post. In 1730 Alexander Spotswood accepted the position. The ex-governor of Virginia had kept a keen interest in America's Mail service. His name appears often in the chronicles of the post, most specifically when he tried to improve the service between New York and Philadelphia by establishing a less cumbersome route through New Jersey. But Spotswood will particularly be remembered for his appointing Benjamin Franklin, the printer, master of the Philadelphia post office in 1737. This decision was not an easy one for the deputy postmaster general because it meant the replacement of one of Franklin's most formidable rivals. Franklin and William Bradford both were newspaper publishers, and as such no brotherly love existed between the two men. More will be said about this rivalry later in this Chapter.

For more than 42 years the American system had been headed by

one single deputy postmaster general. Then in 1753, because of the increasing demand for a better service and because of the vastness of the territory, the Lords in London decided to put two men in command rather than one. The first twin deputy postmasters general were Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter. The latter has acquired much postal experience during the several years he had been in charge of the post office in Williamsburg. After Hunter's death Franklin was joined by John Foxcroft. When the Philadelphian was dismissed by action of the postmasters general on charges of "pernicious activity" Hugh Finlay, Quebec's postmaster, took his place and served as such until the outbreak of the revolution. Then the duumvirate came to an end.

The annual salary of each of the deputy postmasters general was established at 300 pounds sterling. However, the gentlemen in London, who always were alert to any possibility of economizing, decided that Finlay was "to continue to act and do the Duty of Surveyor", but he was "not to bring any Charge upon the Revenue for traveling of other Expenses." (b-8)

In 1763 the American postal system underwent an important change. When as a result of the Paris peace treaty Canada and the Floridas became British colonies it was found necessary to devide the colonial posts into two districts, each under the immediate control of the General Post Office in London. Franklin and Foxcroft had their territory extended to Quebec in the north, while the Carolinas plus Georgia were combined with the Floridas and the Bahama Islands to form a southern district, with Charlestown as a headquarters.

The first deputy postmaster general in the southern district was Benjamin Barons, who was succeeded in 1756 by Peter Delancey, and in 1771 by George Roupell.

The revolutionary war wiped out all preconceived divisional distinctions. Roupell's territory temporarily was extended to include the postal road from Philadelphia through Annapolis, Williamsburg, Halifax, N.C., Wilmington and Charlestown to Savannah in february 1777. The reorganization of the American post office in 1782 abandoned the system of two separate districts altogether. After Ebenezer Hazard became postmaster general in 1782 Roupell was released from his post in Charlestown.

The deputy postmasters general often were criticized by their superiors in London for not establishing themselves in New York, where according to Queen Anne's law the main office of the American post should have been located. Franklin, having a house in Philadelphia, and Hunter, living in Williamsburg, felt no inclination to move to New York as long as the postmasters general were not willing to pay for office space. However, when John Foxcroft succeeded Hunter in 1761 an office was established in Manhattan. By their letter of December 2, 1772, the postmasters general were willing to allow 100 pound sterling annually "for the Rent of a House properly situated for the Management of the Business in which himself (Finlay,

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(b-8) Anthony Todd's letter of February 8, 1774. American Letter Book. Public Record Office, London.

the surveyor) or the Deputy General(Foxcroft) for the time being shall reside."

Serving directly under the deputy postmasters general were a secretary, a comptroller and one or more surveyors, though at times these functions were combined or left vacant. The business of the transatlantic mail service at the New York end was attended to by an agent, who received a salary of 60 pounds sterling per annum.

Ruth Lapham Butler, the chronicler of Franklin's career, states in her book (b-9) that "The Comptroller's office was the key position in relation to the Deputy Postmasters General and the higher authorities in England and to the local officers in its capacity as clearing house for records." When in 1757 Franklin and Hunter left for England she quotes the instructions to the comptroller as follows:

> "... 2. Every Postmaster ought to send you his Quarterly Acct. regularly, immediately after the Quarter Day, if any neglect this, you are likewise to write to them and urge them to Punctuality.
>
> When you receive these accounts you are toexamine and compare them with your Comptroller's and with the preceding Accts. rec'd from the same Offices, correct the Mistakes and Errors if any, and observe whether any new or uncustomary Charges are introduced.
>
> 3. As there is an Inconveninece in the Accounts when different Quarter Days are observed by different Offices, you are to endeavour holding them all to the Observation of the same Quarter Days, viz. Lady Day or March 25, Midsummer or June 24 and michaelmas or Sept. 20, and Christmas of Decemer 25, the same being the quarter days used in the General Post Office in Great Britain.
>
> 4. After the Quarterly Accounts are corrected and rectified, you are to carry the Balances due from the several Postmasters to the Debit of their respective Accts. in your Comptroller's Book; and endeavour to collect and receive all such Ballances from time to time as they arise, directing them to be remitted to you in such Specie and Manner as to you shall deem most advantageous to the Office; giving Credit to the several Postmasters in your Books likewise for the Ballance or other Sums you from time to time receive.
>
> 5. The money rec'd from the several Offices, after deducting a Commission of 7½% which is allow'd you for your Care and Trouble in the Premises, you are to remit to us or either of us while we remain in England in good Bills of Exchange, till you shall have farther or other orders.
>
> 6. If any Postmaster should in our Absence die, or

(b-9) ibid.

> resign his Office, or misbehave therein or neglect the Duties Thereof, or remove out of the town or country where his Office was usually kept, you are to appoint another to execute the same pro tempore till you receive farther Direction from us in that Matter; taking Care that such Deputy by you appointed do not act but under the usual and legal Securities and Qualifications."

Apparently Franklin and Hunter gave Parker authority which went far beyond the normal duties of a comptroller. He justly received credit for successfully operating the department during the period 1757-1761.

Naturally a comptroller's responsibilities changed with the circumstances under which the post office department operated. Moreover, during most of the time the duties of a comptroller were combined with those of a secretary. A detailed description of their individual tasks has been found in the minute book of the deputy postmasters general's board meetings, part of which has been preserved in the archives of the Massachusetts Historical Society. During the meeting of November 28, 1774, with John Foxcroft and Hugh Finlay present, the following was recorded:

> "... as it appears necessary that the business of the Secretary, and the business of the Comptroller be fixed, seeing that both Employments are held under one Commission - Let it be settled as follows.
>
> The Comptroller's business is, and shall henceforth be untill new Orders.
>
> To keep regular Books of Account, and in them to enter punctually as soon as received the Sum due by every Deputy, as it shall appear by his accounts every Quarter, and to give him Credit for every remittance or payment as soon as received, that at one view the tru state of every Deputy Account may at any time be seen by the Deputy Postmasters General, when they may chuse to examine the Books.
>
> The Comptroller is without fail to write to every Deputy who shall be more than a Month after the Quarter ends, in sending his Accts. and if he does not transmit them by return of the post after the demand made, he is to inform the D.Postmaster General thereof.
>
> And as soon after the 5th day of every April as possible, he is to make up from his Books a General Account in the form presented by the Postmaster General, that the Deputies General may examine it by his Books & Vouchers, and transmit it to England with the Ballance arising thereon, by the June Packet in every year, and the Comptroller is to take care to have all the Deputies Accounts in due time that he may be enabled to obey this Order punctually.
>
> All the Accounts and Letters which he receives should

> be folded up, in one and the same length and breadth, and regularly endorsed and laid up in Alphabetical order - and every Letter which he writes to Deputies, or to other people on Office Business must be entered in a book kept for that purpose. He is by every Packet to provide a Bill of Exchange on London, at 30 days sight, for £133 ... at least; that the Deputy General may remit it to the Receiver General in England."

Similarly Alexander Colden, who was secretary-comptroller to the Board of deputy postmasters general at that time, describes his duties as a secratary.

> "The secretay is at all times to be ready to attend the Deputy Post Masters General on Office Business, and in particular to give due attendance at the Board every Monday and every Thursday at 11 o'clock in the forenoon.
>
> He is to keep a fair Copy of the Minutes of the business transacted, or ordered to be transacted every Boardday.
>
> He is to lay before the Board all Letters he receives on Office Business, and to keep these Letters in proper form, regularly folded up and indorse. He is to enter in the Office Letter Book all Letters written by the Deputies General, or by their order.
>
> He is to keep in proper order all Bonds given by Deputies, Riders, etc.
>
> He is to supply all Deputies with proper Forms, and Official Papers, and he is to take care to have a sufficient quantity in his possession at all times.
>
> Whenever an Order, entered in the Minut Book is fulfilled, he is to put the initials of his Name before it in the Margin with the Day of the Month, as this is done.

Two weeks after Alexander Colden wrote the above in his minute book he died and was succeeded by his son Richard Nicholls Colden.

A surveyor's job may probably best be described as that of a traveling middleman between the main office and the local postmasters, a supervisor and a trouble-shooter. At one point (b-10) it is said that Franklin and Foxcroft "made general settlements with every office, a task which would normally fall to a surveyor:.

In 1737 postmaster general Alexander Spotswood made Franklin a "supervisor of the posts", a function which probably was close to a surveyor's job. John Dalley was a surveyor of the posts in 1754, Hugh Finlay held that position before he succeeded Franklin as deputy postmaster general, at a salary of 200 pound sterling per annum, and William Goddard accepted a surveyor's position for a while in the fall of 1775. Ebenezer Hazard served as such during Richard Bache's general postmastership (1776-1782) before succeeding the latter in that office.

(b-10) ibid. p. 87.

Hugh Finlay's journal, which he wrote during an extensive inspection trip between September, 1773 and June, 1774, is one of the most valuable documents for the student of colonial postal history. A copy of it has been preserved in the Smithsonian Institution. As a surveyor he visited "post offices between Falmouth in Casco Bay in the Province of Massachusetts and Savannah in Georgia", and in his report he has given a perfect portrayal of a surveyor's duty.

He describes the condition of the post roads and the ferries, the availability of horses, and the ease of obtaining shelter and food for the post rider as well as for his animal. The manner in which the mail carriers performed their duties, good, bad and very bad, had his painstaking attention, and he advised his superiors how, in his opinion, existing abuses could be corrected or ilimi-nated. At several points along the two-thousand odd mile route he studied the possibilities of improving the postal service by deviating from the old tracks, evading dangerous river crossings, shifting the road to localities where growing population or budding commercial interests demanded improvement in the system of communications. For this purpose he conferred extensively with governors and business people.

But most of his time was spent with the deputy postmasters, listening to their problems, discussing their grievances, inspecting their books, settling their accounts, and interpreting the latest regulations.

Finlay's surveying journey was cut short by the growing unrest in the northern colonies and by the competition the royal postal service was experiencing from Goddard's activities. It was the beginning of a long period during which a surveyor's task became hazardous and in many instances an impossibility.

In a letter to the Post Office Committee of the Congress Hazard, who was surveyor of the posts during the years of the revolutionary war, described the formidable obstacles he was faced with.

"Boston, Decer. 2d, 1779.

Gentlemen,

The very great Difficulties I am put to for Want of some regular Method of paying the Post Riders in my District, with a proper Degree of Punctuality, obliges me to trouble you upon this Subject, and to request your Attention to it.

The Riders are generally poor Men, who as Times are can scarcely find Money to pay the Expenses of one Quarter, and yet we seldom have it in our Power to settle with them for that Quarter before a third has commenced, and by that Time the Money has depreciated in such a Manner as to be worth but little more than half what it was when it became due. An instance of this Kind has lately occurred. A Quarter's Pay became due to the Riders the

5th of last July; another the 5th of October; & the Money to discharge those Debts has very lately come to Hand: in July Bills sold here at Twelve for one; now they are thirty; - this is a much greater Depreciation than I mentioned, but as the Oct. Quarter was so long due, one half may be the average.

As the Riders can not wait so long for their Money, and indeed would cease to ride were it not paid them sooner; (Whereby the Service would be totally obstructed) I have generally been obliged to advance my own, and in several Instances have been under the Necessity of borrowing from Friends for the Support of public Credit, and we have been the sufferer by the Depreciation.

I have at different Times represented these Things to the Postmaster General, and in the most pressing Manner requested Supplies of Cash: - his Answer has generally been that he has applied to the Committee for Money, and as soon as he received it it shall be sent: - but I received it no sooner than formerly.

Now, Gentlemen, can no Method for preventing these Delays, & the consequent Injuries to the Service be thought of ? or is it necssary that the present tedious Routine should still be continued ? could I suppose this, I should be silent; - but as the public Good will certainly be preferred to the Formalities of office, I will take the Liberty of observing, That I apprehend all the Difficulties would be removed, would Congress consent that the Postmaster General might receive from the Treasury any Sum not exceeding ... Thousand Dollars quarterly in Advance, he to be accountable, at the Expiration of each Quarter, for the Expenditures. The number of Dollars may be ascertained by a Conference with the Postmaster General & Comptroller; and the latter immediately on Receipt of the Money ought to forward it in just Proportions to the Surveyors, who are to pay it to the riders.

I mention <u>in Advance</u> because that is the only Way in which it can be received so as that the Riders may be punctually paid for on Account of the Fluctuating State of the Currency we find (at least I do) that we can have the Business done cheaper by fixing the Price at the <u>Expiration</u>, than at the Beginning of the Quarter; and some of our Stages are so far distant from Phila. that should we <u>then</u> send on our Estimates, another Quarter at least would be expired before they would reach Philadelphia, and the Money be procured and sent to us; so that the Difficulty arising from the Depreciation would not be removed; - but in Case of an Advance, the Riders finding they were punctually paid, would not only be better tempered, but would even do the Business at a lower Rate.

It may not be proper to mention here that the Wages of the Post Riders have been considerably enhanced by the extravagant Allowances made to Expresses, of which our Riders receive pretty regular Information. One of them on whose Veracity I can depend, informed me that the Expresses have twenty Dollars pr. Day allowed them while they are in the Service, whether they ride or not, that, during their being in Quarters, they are permitted to draw Rations of Provisions & Forage, and that none of their Stages exceed twenty Miles. The Number and Expense of these People is certainly an Object worthy the Attention of Congress.

I have been repeatedly informed that they carry Letters which ought to pay Postage, and a Merchant once told me that he had received one by Express from Phila. but as he did not know his Name, and the Rider was gone, I could not get his Pay for that Ride stopped, agreeable to the Direction of Congress however, I had the Resolution republished, and wrote to the Quarter Master General upon the Subject; - his Reply was, in Substance, that he knew of no Letters (besides those which Congress allowed) being carried by Express, except for Officers, and their Services & Sufferings were such that he thought them entitled to the Privilege of hearing from their Friends by every Opportunity, and therefore should not prevent it; - this Letter was sent to Congress, and an Explanation of Their Resolution requensted, but- I have heard no more of it.

Besides carrying Letters which they ought not, the Expresses sometimes do their own proper Business in a very careless Way. One of them, pretending he could not find his Horse, once offered a Post Rider fifteen Dollars to carry his Dispatches about twenty Miles, to the next Express; - the Post carried them.

Nowithstanding the Expresses receive such extravagand Pay, and seldom have more than a few single Letters to carry, the Army Returns are usually sent by the Posts. There is certainly a great Impropriety, as well as Risque in this; for as the Time of the Posts's Arrival at particular Places is stated, it would be an easy Matter (moreespecially as he must always travel the same Road) for Tories or other illdisposed Persons to waylay him, and put his Mail into the Hands of the Enemy, as has been once the Case since the War began. Did the Enemy know that those Returns are sent in this Way, it is easy to conceive how glad they would be of aso good an Opportunity of knowing our Strength, and Congress cannot be ignorant what Advantages such Information, at Times, would give them.

Our Expenses must encrease very much soon, if some

Method cannot be found out to raise the value of Continental Currency. The Regulation of Prices lately restrained it for a while, but in the End encreased its Violence. The following are the present Prices of a few Articles.

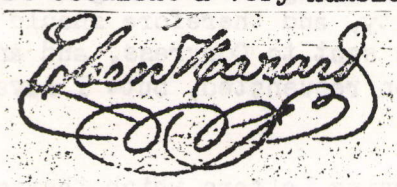
Bills upon Europe, 30 for 1. Flour ℔ 65 pr.Ct. reckoning Dollars at 6/. Indian Corn 3o Dollrs. pr. Bushel, Rye 50, Wesy Indian Rum 50 Dollrs. pr. Gallon; New England Rum 30; Fish ℔ 60 pr, Quintal; Boading 110 Dollars pr. Week, Horsekeeping, upon Hay, 10 Dollrs. pr. Night; a Day's Labour 26 to 30 Dolrs. & other Things in Proportion.

Cannot Congress borrow a Sum in Bills from the Chevalier de Luzerne? A Loan of that Kind would certainly b for his Master's Interest, and they might be sold now so as to purchase a Large Sum of Continental Money, & lessen the Quantity in Circulation.

The Bills which Congress draw on France may be applied to the same Purpose as soon as the Certificates upon which they are now paid, as Interest, are redeemable.

I am Gentlemen

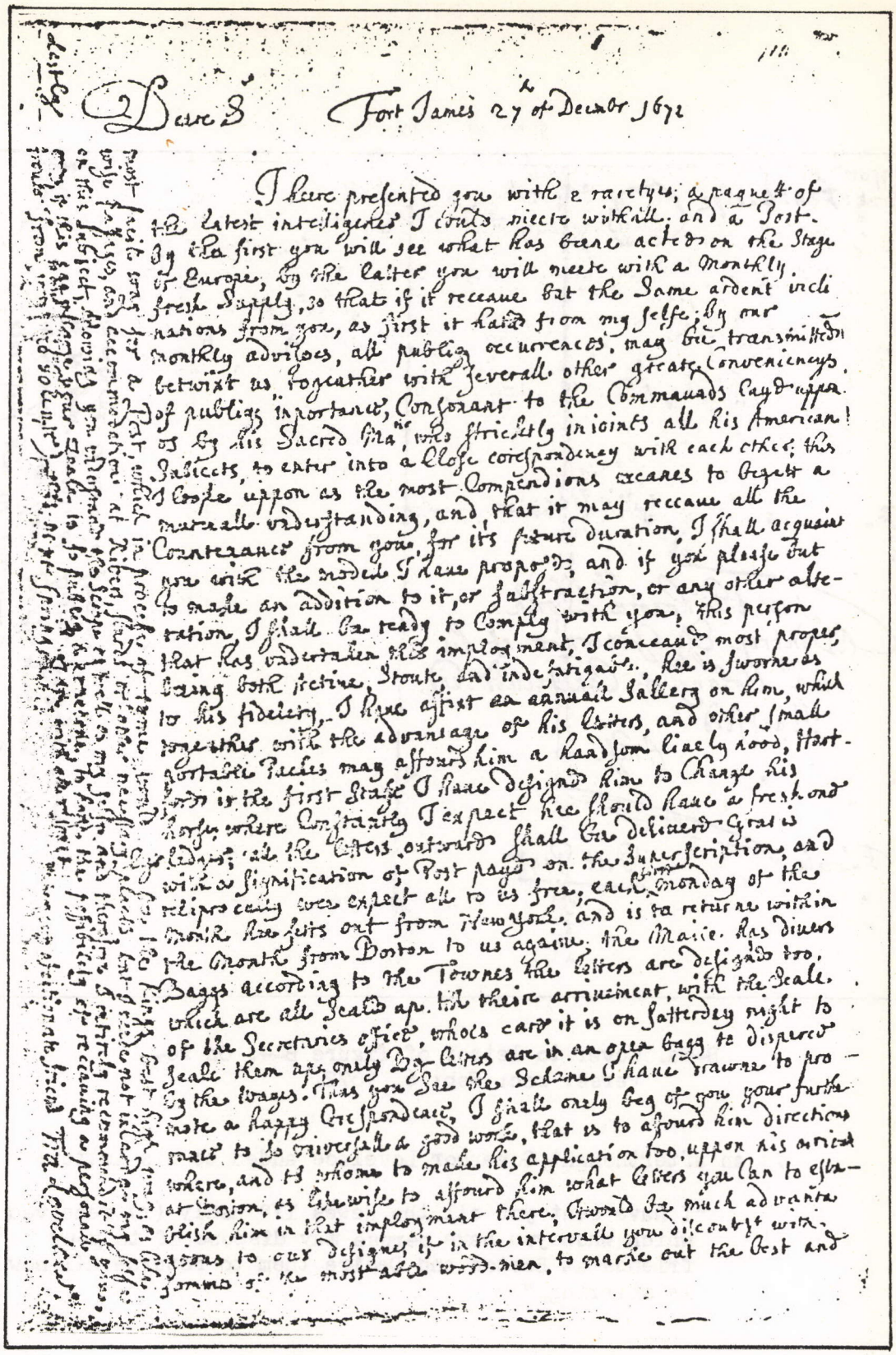
Your most obedient & very Humble Servant"



The problems of the Post Office, and of a young nation at war, could hardly have been more poignantly presented than surveyor Hazard did in this letter.

One step down on the hierarchic ladder stood the deputy postmaster, probably the most valuable man in the entire organization, though next and very close to him came the post rider. Success or failure of the system mainly rested upon the individual performances of these two categories of functionaries, and particularly on their mutual coopemation. Both were bound by instructions, which in the course of time became more precise and more exacting. Moreover these men were obliged to take an oath of fidelity, and bonds had to be posted.

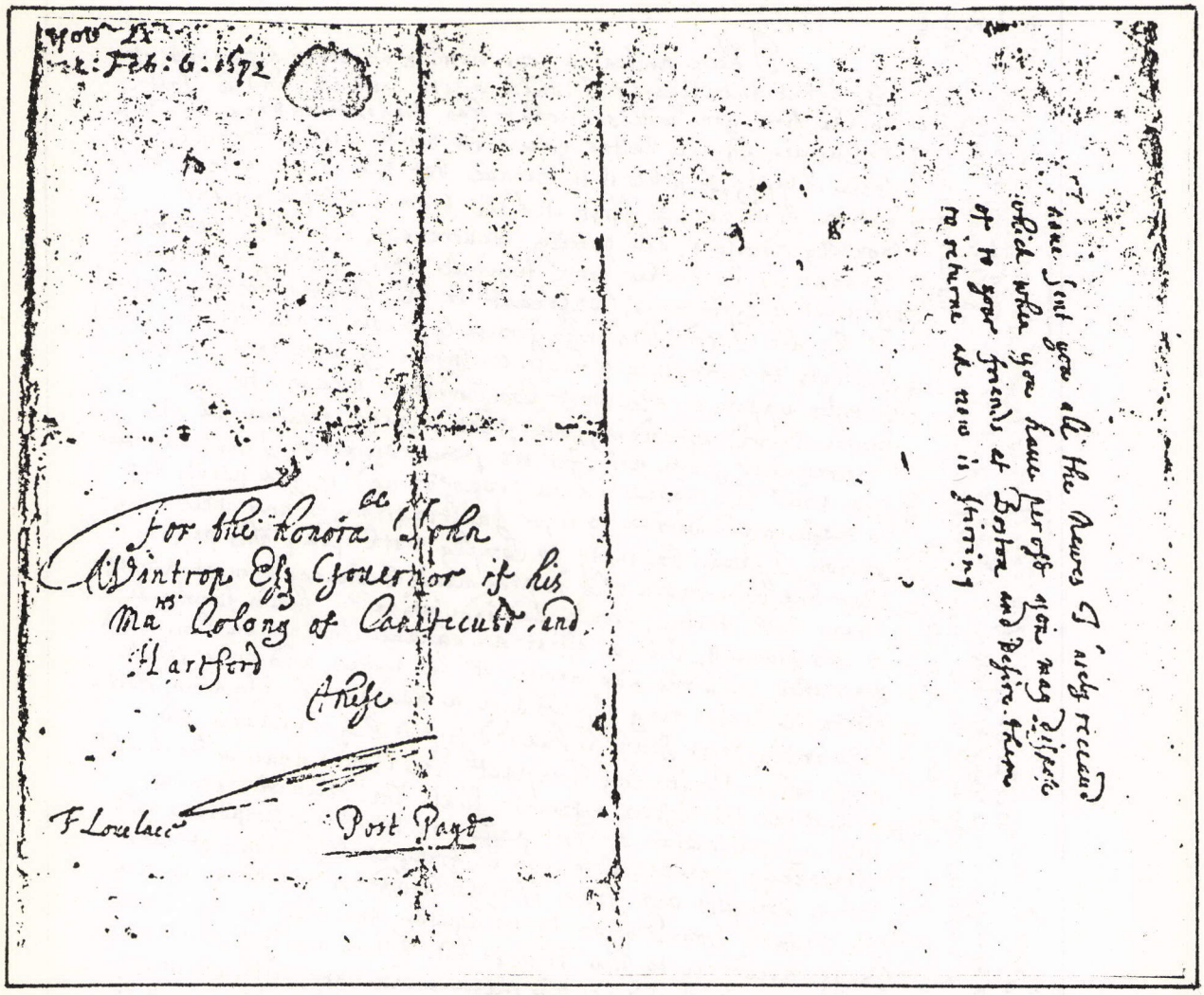
The earliest set of instructions which have been recorded are those to the Carrier who was sent with the mail by New York's Governor Francis Lovelace to his colleagues in Connecticut and Massachusetts in January, 1673. Among the letters this man carried was the famous message which is depicted in figures B-4 and -4a. The governor's directive give the impression that this individual, whose name still is a matter of speculation, incorporated in his person the functions of mailman, postmaster and surveyor. They read as follows:



Deare S. Fort James 27th of Decembr 1672

I heere presented you with 2 raretyes; a paquett of the latest intelligence I could meete withall, and a Post. By the first you will see what has beene acted on the Stage of Europe, by the latter you will meete with a Monthly fresh Supply, so that if it receaue but the Same ardent inclinations from you, as first it hated from my selfe; by our monthly advisoes, all publiq occurrences may bee transmitted betwixt us, togeather with severall other greate Conveniencys of publiq importance, Consonant to the Commaunds Layd upon us by his Sacred Matie who strictly inioints all his American Subiects, to enter into a Close corespondency with each other; this I loose uppon as the most Compendious meanes to begett a mutuall understanding, and that it may receaue all the Countenance from you, for it's future duration, I shall acquaint you with the model I haue proposed, and if you please but to make an addition to it, or substraction, or any other alteration, I shall be ready to Comply with you, this person that has undertaken this imployment, I conceaue most proper, being both Active, Stoute, and indefatigable. Hee is sworne as to his fidelety, I haue affixt an annuall Sallery on him, which togeather with the advantage of his letters, and other small portable Packes may affourd him a handsom liuelyhood, Hartford is the first Stage I haue designed him to Change his horse, where Constantly I expect hee should haue a fresh one ledger; all the letters outwards shall be deliuered Gratis with a signification of Post payd on the Superscription, and reliprocally wee expect all to us free, each first monday of the Month hee setts out from New York, and is to returne within the Month from Boston to us againe, the Maile has diuers Baggs according to the Townes the letters are designed too, which are all Sealed up till theire arriuement, with the Seale of the Secretaries office, whoes care it is on Satterday night to Seale them up, onely By-letters are in an open bagg to disperce by the wayes. Thus you See the Scheme I haue drawne to promote a happy Corespondence, I shall onely beg of you your furtherance to so universall a good work, that is to affourd him directions where, and to whome to make his application too, uppon his arrival at Boston, as likewise to affourd him what letters you Can to establish him in that imployment there, I would be much advantageous to our designe, if in the intervall you discoubst with somme of the most able wood-men, to marke out the best and

B-4. New York, December 27, 1672. "Post Payd". Left New York January 22, 1672/3 to Hartford, arrival February 6. (Stokes: Iconography of Manhattan).



B-4a. Cover to letter of figure B-4. On reverse: rec: Feb: 6, 1672.

As an afterthought Governor Lovelace added to his letter:

"I have sent you all the Newes I^ve usely (?) received which when you have peruse may dispose of to your friends at Boston and Desire them to returne all now is stirring."

"In the first place you are to take yor Oath of fidelity wch the Secretary shall administer to you, your Duty as to the Generall is included in that Oath.

Next, you are to comport yor selfe wth all Sobriety & Civility to those that shall intrust you, & not exact on tem for the prices both of Letters and Pacquetts.

You are principally to apply yor selfe to the Governors especially Governor Winthrop, from whom you shall receive the best Direction how to forme ye best Post-Road.

You are likewise to advize where the most commodious place will bee to leave all theby-Letters out of yor Road, wth when having it once well fixt, you are not only to leave the Letters there, but at your returne to call for Answers, & leave a Publication of your Resolutions, the wch you mys cause to bee disperst to all parts, that soe all may know when & where to leave their Letters.

You are to give mee an Acco^{t} of Negotiation at this time to the end I may bee satisfyed of all proceedings, & bee able to assist you if Occasion shall require.

Where you think it requisite you are to marke some Trees that shall direct Passengers the best way, & to fix certaine Houses for your several Stages both bait & lodge at.

When any persons are desirous to travaile wth you, you are to treat them civilly, & to afford them yor best help & assistance, that I may heare noe Complaint of you.

You shall doe well to provide yor selfe of a Spare Horse, Horne, good Port-Mantles, that soe neither Letters nor Pacquets receive any Damage under yor hands.

There are some other Consideracons wch I shall forbeare to mention till yor returne, & I receive a further Accompt of you, and soe God bless all yor honest Vndertakings.

ffran: Lovelace

You are also to detect & cause to bee apprehended all fugitive Souldyers & Servants runn away from these parts." (b-11)

It is interesting to compare the contents of this old document with the set of instructions that were issued by Benjamin Franklin and William Hunter in 1753. They are copied in an Annex to this Chapter.

Of equal importance is the oath that was administered by the Governor's Secretary to this postman. It follows here.

(b-11) Stokes: The Iconography of Manhattan Island, Vol. IV, p. 287.

"You doe Sweare by the Everlasting God, that you will truly & faithfully discharge the trust reposed in you as a Post Master, and that you will neither directly nor indirectly detayne, conceale, or open any Letters, Packetts, or other Goods committed to your Charge, but carefully, & honestly deliver or cause to be delivered all such Letters Packetts or other Goods to the Persons they properly belong unto, & that you will make all the Expedition in passing and repassing the severall Stages wth all speed, & to make noe more stay than necessarily belongs to the refreshing your selfe and Horse, & in all things truly & soberly to comport yorselfe, so as belongs to the rust reposed in you, and as a Post Master ought to doe." (b-12)

Whereupon this man may have replied: "I doe".

Naturally the oaths changed in the course of later years, but the functions of postmasters and post riders alike were considered to be of a delicate and confidential nature justifying such a protective measure.

Throughtout the one hundred odd years covered by this narrative a postmaster's task remained substantially the same, though the volume of his work gradually increased, particularly in the larger cities such as Boston, New York and Philadelphia. But no postmaster's day was filled to the extent that he could make a living for himself and his family on the meager ten or twenty percent commission to which he was entitled from his postal receipts. Fixed salaries did not exist in the colonial postal service, except for the top officials, and their payment depended entirely on the availability of funds. Often they were insufficient. Consequently a postmaster had to earn an income from other activities.

A letter or packet brought in from an other postoffice first had to be rated. The amount of postage depended on the number of sheets it contained and upon the distance it had travelled. This principle remained in effect during the entire colonial and revolutionary periods. A postmaster's main guide in determining a letter's rate was a chart posted on a board.Handwritten in the earliest days of Franklin's administration (See the Chapter on Rates), these rate tables later were printed by James Parker in Woodbridge, New Jersey, who was also the comptroller in Franklin's main office. (B-5). The originals of these broad sides measured 18 x 22 inches. They were supposed to be hung on the wall of each post office enabling the receivers of mail to check the correctness of the postal charges.

As time progressed new rates were established and additional post offices were opened. Shortly after the tables of figure B-5 were printed and the postal law of 1765 became effective a new tabulation had to be prepared and printed. The second Continental Con-

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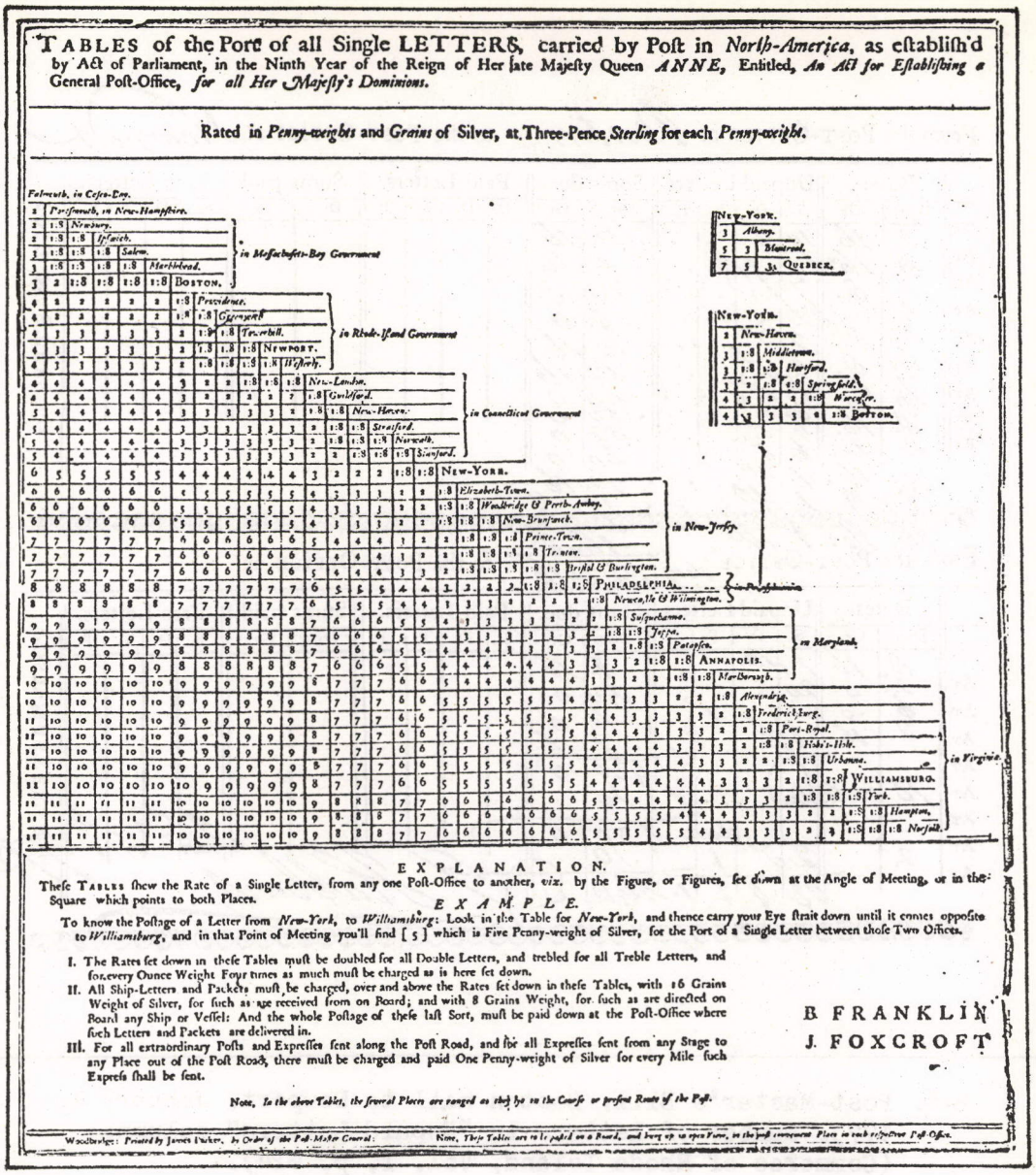
(b-12) ibid.



TABLES of the Port of all Single LETTERS, carried by Poſt in *North-America*, as eſtabliſh'd by Act of Parliament, in the Ninth Year of the Reign of Her late Majeſty Queen *ANNE*, Entitled, *An Act for Eſtabliſhing a* General Poſt-Office, *for all Her Majeſty's Dominions.*

Rated in *Penny-weights* and *Grains* of Silver, at Three-Pence *Sterling* for each *Penny-weight.*

Falmouth, in Cornwall.

Portſmouth, in New-Hampſhire.
Newbury.
Ipſwich.
Salem.
Marblehead.
BOSTON.
in Maſſachuſets-Bay Government

Providence.
Greenwich
Tiverton.
NEWPORT.
Weſterly.
in Rhode-Iſland Government

New-London.
Guilford.
New-Haven.
Stratford.
Norwalk.
Stamford.
in Connecticut Government

NEW-YORK.
Elizabeth-Town.
Woodbridge & Perth-Amboy.
New-Brunſwick.
Prince-Town.
Trenton.
Briſtol & Burlington.
in New-Jerſey.

PHILADELPHIA.
Newcaſtle & Wilmington.
in Pennſylvania

Suſquehanna.
Joppa.
Patapſco.
ANNAPOLIS.
Marlborough.
in Maryland.

Alexandria.
Fredericſburg.
Port-Royal.
Hobbs's-Hole.
Urbanna.
WILLIAMSBURG.
York.
Hampton.
Norfolk.
in Virginia.

NEW-YORK.
Albany.
Montreal.
St. QUEBEC.

NEW-YORK.
New-Haven.
Middletown.
Hartford.
Springfield.
Worceſter.
BOSTON.

EXPLANATION.

Theſe TABLES ſhew the Rate of a Single Letter, from any one Poſt-Office to another, *viz.* by the Figure, or Figures, ſet down at the Angle of Meeting, or in the Square which points to both Places.

EXAMPLE.

To know the Poſtage of a Letter from *New-York*, to *Williamſburg*: Look in the Table for *New-York*, and thence carry your Eye ſtrait down until it comes oppoſite to *Williamſburg*, and in that Point of Meeting you'll find [5] which is Five Penny-weight of Silver, for the Port of a Single Letter between thoſe Two Offices.

I. The Rates ſet down in theſe Tables muſt be doubled for all Double Letters, and trebled for all Treble Letters, and for every Ounce Weight Four times as much muſt be charged as is here ſet down.

II. All Ship-Letters and Packets muſt be charged, over and above the Rates ſet down in theſe Tables, with 16 Grains Weight of Silver, for ſuch as are received from on Board; and with 8 Grains Weight, for ſuch as are directed on Board any Ship or Veſſel: And the whole Poſtage of theſe laſt Sort, muſt be paid down at the Poſt-Office where ſuch Letters and Packets are delivered in.

III. For all extraordinary Poſts and Expreſſes ſent along the Poſt Road, and for all Expreſſes ſent from any Stage to any Place out of the Poſt Road, there muſt be charged and paid One Penny-weight of Silver for every Mile ſuch Expreſs ſhall be ſent.

B FRANKLIN
J. FOXCROFT

Note, In the above Tables, the ſeveral Places are ranged as they lye in the Courſe or preſent Route of the Poſt.

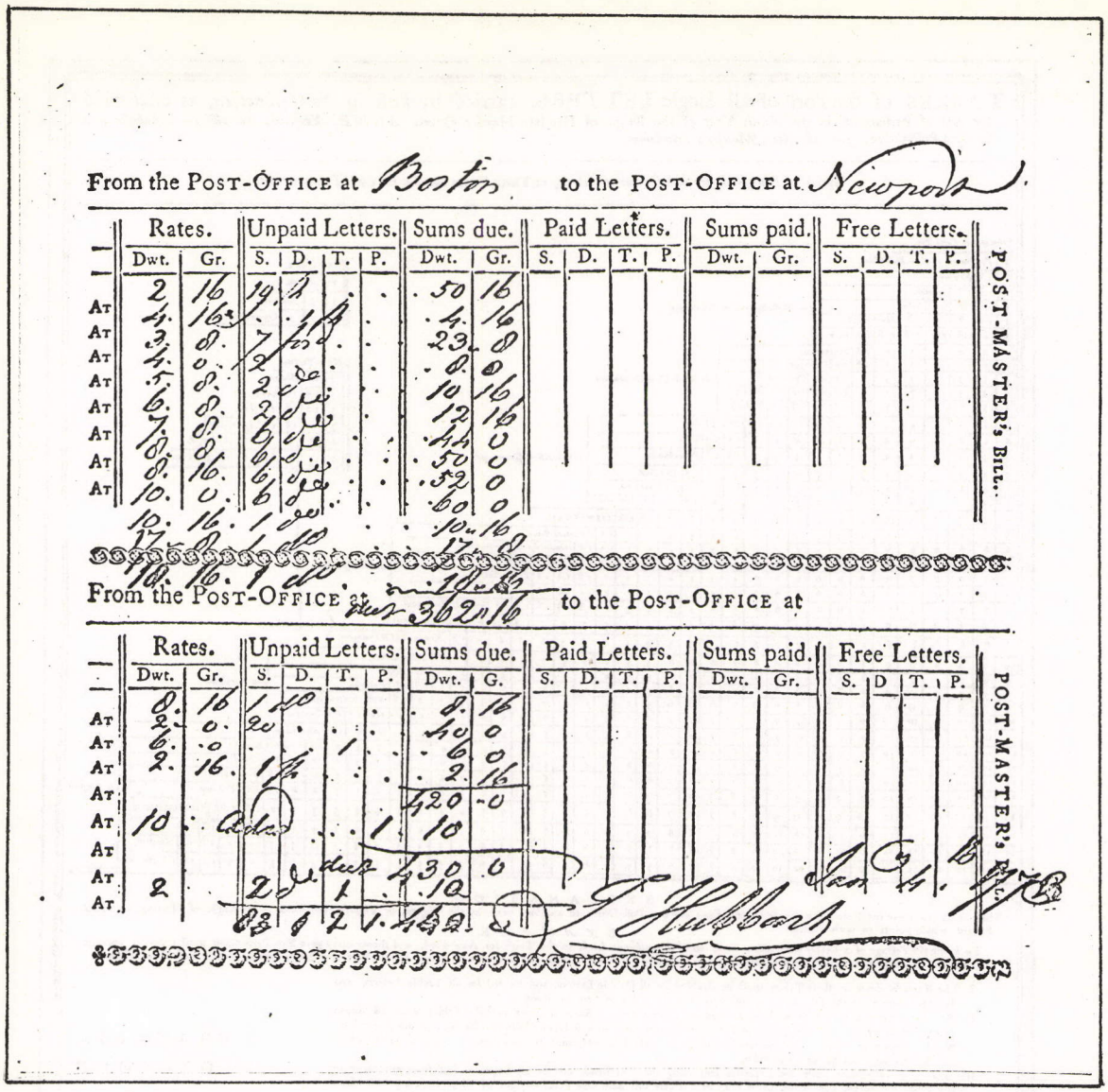
Woodbridge: Printed by James Parker, by Order of the Poſt-Maſter General.

Note, Theſe Tables are to be paid on a Board, and hung up in open View, in the moſt conſpicuous Place in each reſpective Poſt-Office.

B-5. Tables of postage rates based on the provisions of Queen Anne's postal law, revised in accordance with the incorporation of Canada(1763) in the American Postal System. (Copied from Postal Markings).

gress established its own rates which appeared in a similar form over the signature of America's first Postmaster General, Benjamin Franklin.

When post-day came a postmaster had to prepare the outgoing mail for the rider, and make out a Post-Master's Bill which listed the letters according to their destinations. The larger offices



From the Post-Office at Boston to the Post-Office at Newport

	Rates.		Unpaid Letters.				Sums due.		Paid Letters.				Sums paid.		Free Letters.			
	Dwt.	Gr.	S.	D.	T.	P.	Dwt.	Gr.	S.	D.	T.	P.	Dwt.	Gr.	S.	D.	T.	P.
At	2	16	19	1			50	16										
At	4	16		1			4	16										
At	3	8	7	for			23	8										
At	4	0	2	do			8	0										
At	5	8	2	do			10	16										
At	6	8	2	do			12	16										
At	7	8	6	do			44	0										
At	8	8	6	do			50	0										
At	8	16	6	do			52	0										
At	10	0	6	do			60	0										
	10	16	1	do			10	16										
	17	8	1	do			17	8										
	18	16	1	do			18	16										

POST-MASTER's BILL.

From the Post-Office at [illegible] to the Post-Office at

	Rates.		Unpaid Letters.				Sums due.		Paid Letters.				Sums paid.		Free Letters.			
	Dwt.	Gr.	S.	D.	T.	P.	Dwt.	G.	S.	D.	T.	P.	Dwt.	Gr.	S.	D	T.	P.
At	8	16	1	do			8	16										
At	2	0	20				40	0										
At	6	0			1		6	0										
At	2	16	1	1/2			2	16										
At							420	0										
At	10		Adv			1	10											
At							430	0										
At	2		2	do	1		10											
At			83	1	2	1	440	0										

POST-MASTER's BILL.

Jan 4 1773

J. Hubbart

B-6. Post-Master's Bill. Boston mail to Newport, January 4, 1773. Number of letters in "Unpaid Letters" column. (Commerce of Rhode Island, Vol. I, p. 424).

arranged them by their rates of postage (Figure B-6). Upon receipt of an incoming mail the contents of a rider's bag or portemanteau were checked against these documents.

Since the postage of very few letters was paid by the senders the addressees as a rule were required to pay upon delivery, unless the postmaster gave them credit for the amount. He was supposed to do this at his own risk.

In later years the postmasters were required to publish a list of undelivrable letters in the local newspaper. When this failed to be successful the letters were sent to the dead-letter-office,

a facility which was introduced by Bejamin Franklin.

When Andrew headed the primitive American postal system in 1693, he required postmasters to "mark every letter with a print". This measure was supposed to make it possible for a receiving postmaster to identify a letter's origin and to return it when found undeliverable. But Hamilton's order was never complied with, at least not during the years of his administration. The earliest handwritten town markings have been seen on letters from Boston mailed in 1703 (See cover on page 2 of the Preface to Part II), but it took more than one half of a century before the New York post office, as the first one in the country, to place a "print", a handstamped one, on an outgoing letter.

This late use of handstamps is somewhat surprising. Not only Hamilton wanted them to be used, but they were officially introduced in the British West Indies by the Joint Postmasters General in a letter dated London, 29th November, 1703. It ordered that each piece of mail be marked by applying a stamp, two copies of which were on their way to Jamaica. As an interesting detail the letter recommended nailing a piece of felt, or an old hat to a board, to wet the felt with ink and moisten the handstamp. When applied to a letter's cover the stamp would leave a neat imprint.

However, the postmasters in the British island were almost as slow in following these instructions as their colleagues on the North American mainland, because the first handstamped letter from Jamaica reported so far dated August 12, 1746. (b-13)

The fact that those handstamps were manufactured in England and supplied to the West Indian post offices is interesting, particularly because the colonial post offices of Pensacola, Charleston and Savannah, which were served by the West Indies packet line, used markers which left imprints of a similar design as those applied in the West Indies. A good example is the townmark of LACOVIA. (b-14)

It was a postmaster's task to account for the monies received and spent, and regularly to report the outcome of his administration to the deputy postmaster general's office. Hugh Finlay's journal, which has been referred to earlier (b-15), drew a somber picture of many a postmaster's bookkeeping, particularly in the smaller communities. About the situation in Salem, Mass. he wrote:

> "His (Edward Norice) books were not in good order, he follows the form, but they are dirty & not

---

(b-13) H.C.Westley: The Early Postal History of the British West Indies and North America, The Postal History Society, 1972. Abstracted from the Falmouth Packet Letter Book. Vol. I, G.P.O. Records.

(b-14) Thomas Foster: Jamaica (1968), p. 63.

(b-15) See the Introduction.

brought up regularly."

In Providence, R.I. he found:

> "... that Mr. Carter had never return'd his accounts."

Conditions in the southern colonies were worse than they were in the north. After a visit with the postmaster in Savannh, Finlay wrote:

> "Demanded a settlement of Dr. Fraser's account ... but the Books of the General Office were not kept regularly, and his debt cou'd not be ascertained from them. He says he cannot settle with me because his children & negroes in his absence from home got into his office & destroyed his Papers."

In Edenton, N.C. Finlay found a confusing situation:

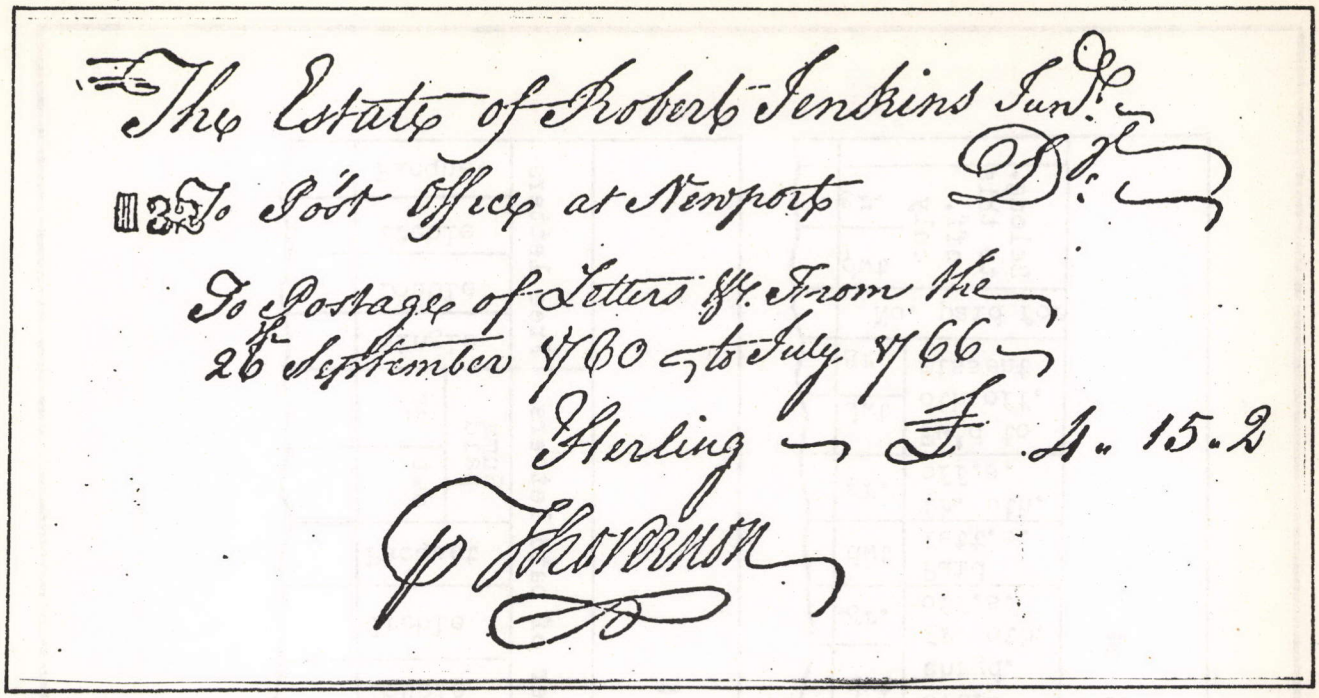
> "By a very erroneous form which the former Secretary Mr. John Stevens sent to all the Deputies as a rule to walk by; he has been led to charge commission on the amount of all letters passing through his hands as well as those forwarded to other offices, as those in his own delivery. I will show him that this is uncustomary, and was never charged; nor allow'd to any deputy."

Naturally there were others who had followed the regulations without failure.

From the very beginning a very weak point in the financial phase of the postal regulations was the shortage of coins which were in circulation and were needed for the payment of postage. As a result many recipients of mail were in debt to the post office. At times settlements were requested and made, but in certain cases credit was granted to an absurd extent. Figure B-7 speaks for itself. The newspaper announcement of figure B-8 is another proof of a colonial postmaster's financial burden.

One of the essential tasks of a postmaster was to translate the Troy rates (pennyweights and grains of silver, dwts and gr.) into local currency values according to the momentary prevailing devaluation factor (See Chapter on Postage Rates). Though not mandatory, many postmasters made it a custom to note currency figures on the covers of incoming letters.

In 1753 when Franklin became one of the deputy postmasters general he designed a double checking but simple system of accounting to be used by the postmasters. By it a postmaster's quarterly report could be checked against the reports of others. The postmasters were required to list in alphabetical order all letters re-


The Estate of Robert Jenkins Junr.
To Post Office at Newport
To Postage of Letters &c. From the
26 September 1760 to July 1766
Sterling £ 4. 15. 2
p Thos Vernon

B-7. Postmaster Thomas Vernon's bill for postage covering a period of almost six years. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

THis is to give Notice to all Perſons in Town and Country, that are Indebted to *Andrew Hay*, Poſt-Maſter at *Perth-Amboy*, for the Poſtage of Letters, to Pay the ſame, or they may expect Trouble; ſome having been due near four Years.

Andrew Hay.

B-8. Notice of Postage Money due to postmaster Andrew Hay of Perth Amboy. (American Weekly Mercury, October 23-30, 1735).

ceived in each incoming mail, stating origin, date of arrival, the number of sheets each letter consisted of and the rate of postage applied on departure. From the composite of these journals a postmaster prepared his quarterly reports (figure B-9), one for incoming letters and one for outgoing ones. A fourth document carried the totals of these reports and provided the basis for remittances to the comptroller's office. With the blank report forms went a set of explanatory instructions to each postmaster. Franklin loved to do all things systematically. A copy of his own account with the General Post Office in London is depcted in the Chapter that carries his name (Chapter M.).

Throughout the colonial period and even during the later years an

L E T T E R S received into the P O S T - O F F I C E at

Time of receiving	Name of offices & Ships from whence they were rec'd.	Date of bills rec'd.	Unpaid letts rec'd.		Way letts rec'd.		Under-chrgd. fr. oth. offs.		Over-chrgd. fr. oth. offs.		Paid letts.	fr. oth. offs.	Fw'd to oth. off. missent		No. paid for	Belong. to this off. only	
			dwt	gr.	dwt	gr.	dwt	gr.	dwt	gr.	dwt	gr.	dwt	gr.		dwt	gr.

L E T T E R S sent from the P O S T - O F F I C E at

Date of bills sent	To what office letters were sent	Number of unpaid letters						Number of paid letters						Free letters			
		Single	Double	Treble	Pacquet	Sums unpaid		Single	Double	Treble	Pacquet	Sums paid		Single	Double	Treble	Pacquet
						dwt	gr					dwt	gr				

Figure B-9

interesting symbiosis existed between postmasters, printers and newspaper publishers. Their professional closeness often resulted in a combination of two, or of all three of these vocations in one and the same person, a form of business which became a very important factor in the development of the American post.

Since the postal service had the task of transporting and distributing written messages its delivery facilities attracted a publisher of news as a welcome sideline to his printing business. Moreover the recipient of a letter was a natural source of information to him. Many a letter was opened and read when picked up at the post office and its contents often became a matter of discussion among the loitering few who were always present when the mail arrived, including the newspaper man, always anxious to gather bits of information which he could use to fill the columns of his news-sheet.

Conversely, the postmaster had an interest in utilizing the local newspaper for informing the public about the operation of his office and the most recent postal schedules. John Campbell, Boston's postmaster during the early years of the eighteenth century, followed his father's footsteps. Campbell senior had made it a business of occasionally supplying government officials and others with printed newsletters. John started publishing these on a more regular basis. As a sample of how the interests of both newspaperman and post master were served at the same time the following announcement appeared in Campbell's NEWS-LETTER:

> "This is to give notice, that when the Street Door is shut and no Light Candle and Lanthorn is seen hanging up in the Postoffice Entry at Boston on the Post nights coming in: Then all persons concerned may be assured without knocking or inquiring that there is no Post yet come in; The same is to be seen on a little Board hanging out of the Post-Office Window." (b-16)

Where this vocational combination existed the public postmastership function could hardly be kept unaffected by the private interests which guided a printer or a newspaperman in the execution of their management. The combination had its good but also its less beneficial sides.

In later years, when cities grew and more than one newspaper was published locally, the printer-postmaster combination developed into a position of power which could decide on success or failure of a competitor. Philadelphia in the seventeen-thirties became a classical example of such a situation.

William Bradford was postmaster in the city of brotherly love and at the same time printed and published the MERCURY. His paper had a considerable distribution outside the city limits. The post

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(b-16) Alvin F. Harlow: Old Post Bags. (New York, 1928), p. 236.

riders Bradford had in his employ for carrying the mail took care of his newspapers as well. Since no regulations existed regarding their being handled by the post no postage was charged for this extra-curricular service.

In those years Benjamin Franklin, who had been a printer from his twelfth year on, first as an apprentice in his brother's shop, and after 1728 on his own in Philadelphia, had started the publication of the PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE. Noone gave the paper much of a chance to survive. But Franklin was a man who did not give up easily. He worked hard and long hours. Only one thing stood in his way. Postmaster Bradford forbade the delivery of the newcomer's paper by his riders. His mastership of the post office gave him a strong weapon in the developing competition between the two publishers. Franklin had to hire his own carriers or bribe his competitor's post boys, the expense of which put him at a considerable disadvantage.

When Bradford for three years failed to send his accounts to the general post office Postmaster General Alexander Spotswood in 1737 felt obliged to remove him from office and Franklin was appointed Bradford's successor. This opened an entirely new prospective to the GAZETTE. Though Franklin did not retaliate by giving his competitor the same treatment the MERCURY lost the struggle between the two papers.

These incidents characterize the unhealthy situation which could result from such a dual management.

Though Franklin had reaped the benefits from the change, upon becoming a deputy postmaster general in 1753 he introduced a long overdue reform measure by which all newspapers were admitted to the mails at a nominal charge. Signed by him and by his colleague, William Hunter, a notice was circulated in the papers, which informed the public of the instructions that had been issued to the deputy postmasters. The customary exchange of single papers between printer and printer was to be continued and free of charge, but "a small additional Consideration per Annum, for each Paper, over and above the Price of the Papers" would have to be paid. For distances not over 50 miles the rate was established at 9 pence sterling, or its equivalent in currency, from 50 to 100 miles 1 shilling 6 pence, and so in proportion.

In 1784 the rates for newspapers were reduced to 8 pence when carried 50 miles, 16 pence for distances of less than 100 miles, and 1 shilling 8 pence for up to 200 miles. The regulations provided further that the papers had to be wrapped in order to facilitate their being counted, and also that if any letters were placed within the wrapped paper letter postage would be assessed.

The word "Post Office" easily leads to an incorrect interpretation, because in modern America it is usually associated with a building where a postmaster performs his duties. In the eighteenth century, however, the term meant the institution, the service, ra-

ther than a facility in a physical sense. In the latter meaning post offices did not exist. The postal establishment of the colonial era did not accomodate its most important servants, the postmasters, with such a building, or a part of it, not even in the larger cities. The wording of the Masschusetts resolution of 1639: "R'chard Fairbanks his house in Boston is the place appointed for all letters" was still applicable to the term "Post Office" one century later. If one substitutes the word "house" of the old directive by shop, store, tavern, or any other place of business, one had a proper description of a postmaster's office at the time Franklin occupied it in Philadelphia. He had no difficulty in finding a suitable spot in a corner of the printery, where he was better at home than anywhere else. And his seventy-odd colleagues throughout the colonies operated from similar "post offices".

How inconvenient conditions in some of those post offices were is described by Finlay when during his survey in 1773 he visited the postmaster of Falmouth (now Portland, Maine):

> "Mr. Child ... represents ... every person who looks for a letter or a news paper freely enters the house, be it post day or not; he cannot afford to set apart a room in his house as an office;- he is continually disturb'd in his family he therefore begs that some other person may be appointed in his stead, unless an office is allow'd him."

An essential wheel in the postal machinery was the rider, and later the stage driver, who carried the mail from place to place. Masters of river and sea-going vessels belonged in the same category. Without their faithful service the system could not have existed. The latter's reputation greatly depended on their punctuality and speed, their reliability and resourcefulness.

In the earliest days of the American post the carriers were hired by the letter writers themselves and later by the postmasters for carrying specific messages whenever the need for such a service occurred. Not until the turn of the century did carriers operate on fixed schedules.

The existing literature on the subject has recorded many interesting details of these services, about the carriers, men like Mumford in Rhode Island, and Mackenfuss in South Carolina, and the manner in which they carried out their duties. From reading these stories one receives the impresssion that during the British administration many riders were sovereign in their little kingdom and did their chores the way that suited them best, not seldom withholding letters from going through the official channels, pocketing the charges, and doing all kinds of time-consuming private businesses while on the road. It made Hugh Finlay report in his Journal that "there's two Post offices in New Port, the King's & Mumford's & that the Revenue of the last is the greatest." Letters which were handed the riders in places where there was no post office, the "way letters", according to the

regulations had to be turned in at the next office on the road, but few of them were processed that way. It should be pointed out however, that there were scores of riders who proved to be worth their wages.

During the years prior to the Declaration of Independence there were five different categories of mail carriers. Each of them played an important role in the operation of the colonial postal system:

1. Men hired by the Parliamentary post offices to operate on the inter-colonial post roads;
2. Men hired by the Provincial Congresses to operate on intra-colonial post roads;
3. Express riders hired by either of the two, or by the Continental Congress, the Army or by private interests;
4. Private riders who carried "exempt" mail;
5. Clandestine mail carriers.

No description needs to be given of the work the men of the first group were performing. They received their instructions from the deputy postmasters, were supposed to ride routes according to the published schedules and to protect the mail from being lost, damaged, soiled or wetted by rain. Their wages were paid by the local postmasters, including a compensation for feeding their horses. Numerous letters carried by these men are on exhibit in illustrations throughout this narative.

The carriers of the second category operated on roads within the bounderies of the several colonies, each of them under the jurisdiction of local authorities. They carried the mail along the cross roads, the feeder lines to the main postal network. With the gradually growing population spreading out over more and more territory, came an increasing demand for such services.

This group of riders were on the provincial payrolls. They usually signed a contract for one year, but received their wages by the month. The postmaster in Williamsburg has recorded in his daybook of the years 1764-65 a few details about the payments to the riders he had hired for serving the local routes. John Beard who rode post between the Virginia capital and Hampton, York and Norfolk was paid 40 pounds sterling per year, and John Barnes received 50 pounds sterling annually for carrying the mail to and from Urbanna and Hobbs Hole. These routes covered distances of 52 and 64 miles respectively. These amounts were a fair average of the wages paid to local mail carriers during the pre-revolution years.

Express riders were engaged for conveying messages between places where no postal services existed, or when their urgent character made it undesirable to wait for the departure of the next regular carrier. The very nature of express services for carrying a limited number of letters made them rather expensive. The men usually were

paid for each single journey, except those employed by the military. The amount depended on the distance or on the number of days they were on the road vice versa. The postage rate schedule of 1763 (B-5) established the express rates for carriers of the first category:

> "For all extraordinary Posts and Expresses sent along the Post Road, and for all Expresses sent from any Stage to any Place out of the Post Road, there must be charged and paid One Penny-weight of Silver for every Mile such Express shall be sent."

At the outbreak of hostilities between British forces in America and French and Indian armies, a war which became the American phase of the Seven Years' War in Europe, the British commanders immediately took steps to ensure prompt transportation of the military mail. In a separate Chapter (An Early American Army Post Office Letter) Benjamin Franklin's efforts to meet General Braddock's wishes in this respect will be discussed. When the war took a turn for the worst the Deputy Postmasters General were requested to take additional measures. Franklin prepared a Memorial of the following contents, which he sent to General Abercrombie for his approval:

> "It has been proposed to keep in constant Readiness a Number of Riders and Horses at different Parts of the Continent, viz at New York 4, at Pilad.3, ... in Connecticut 2, and some in the intermediate Stages. These to be always ready to go at a Moment's Warning, with Dispatches for the King's Service.
>
> This method will doubtless answer the End, with the Addition, That every Rider be empowered to press a Horse where his own fails; because he may happen to fail between Stages in some Place where there are no Horses held for him.
>
> But as the Men and Horses so to be kept in Readiness to go at a Moment's Warning cannot well be imploy'd in any other Business, they must be paid as if always in actual service, which will make the Expense very high.
>
> And as Riders and Horses may every where be immediately procur'd, on proper Encouragement I am of Opinion it would answer as well, and be much less expensive.
>
> To order the Postmasters all along the Continent, to furnish Horses and Riders for the General Service whenever Demanded impowering them to allow 4d Sterling p. Mile to each Rider, and 2d Sterling for each Horse, going & returning.
>
> To request the Governors of the several Colonies to furnish each Postmaster in their repective Governments with general Warrants for impressing Horses on Occasion, one of which Warrants each Rider may have with him.
>
> If this method is approv'd of, I will immediately apply to the several Governors for such Warrants

and give the necessary Orders to the Postmasters. If the other is rather chosen, I will cause Riders and Horses to be hired and retain'd in Readiness for the Service through out the Continent.

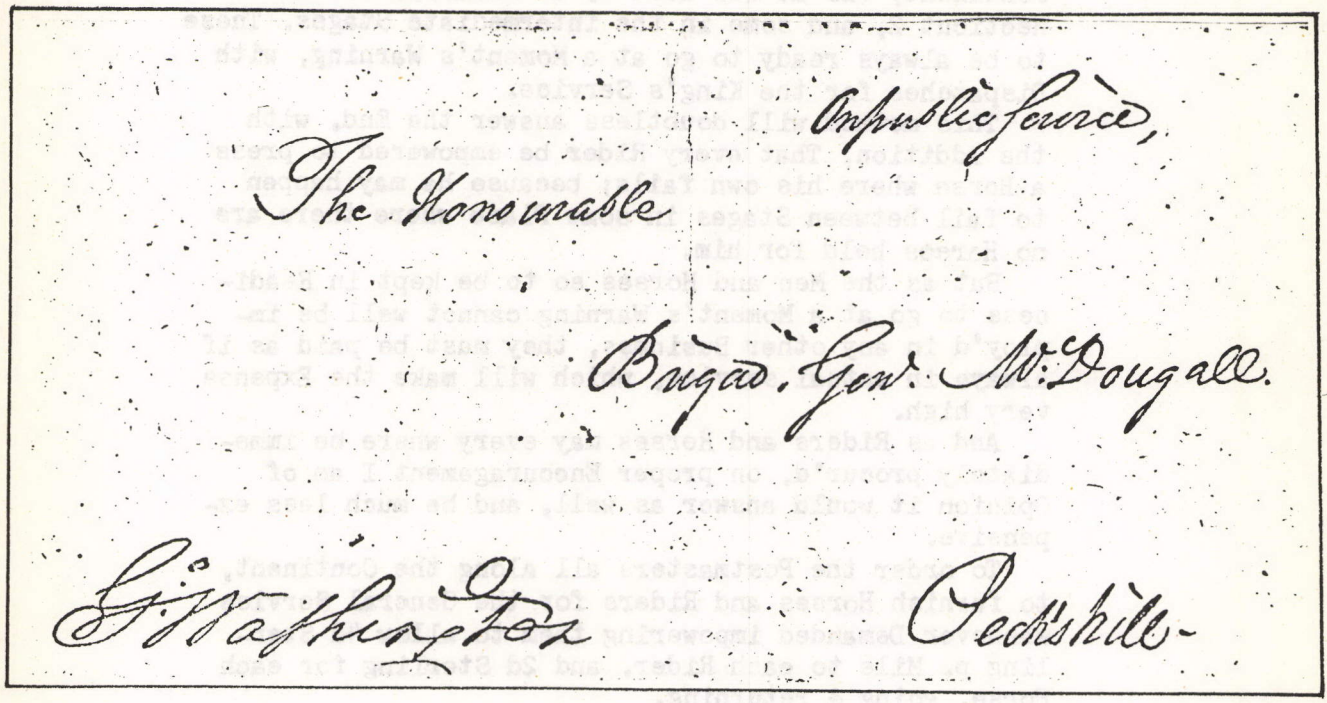
New York, June 22, 1756.

B.Franklin, Postm.Genl."

One month later Franklin wrote the following memorandum for his files:

"The above Memorial was presented to General Abercrombie who consulted Governor Hardy upon it. The latter propos'd Method was thought most eligible, but the Allowance of 6d. Sterling for each Mile going and each Mile returning was judg'd too high, and it was suppos'd Expresses might readily be obtain'd on more easy Terms. I agreed to provide several to be ready at Lord Loudon's Arrival; & as his ldp. was daily expected, the determination was left to him, which Method should be follow'd for the future. Three Expresses are accordingly retain'd and ready.

July 22, 56. BF."



B-10. Morristown, N.J. April 12, 1777 to Peekskill, N.Y. by Army Express. (Huntington Library. HM. 5032).

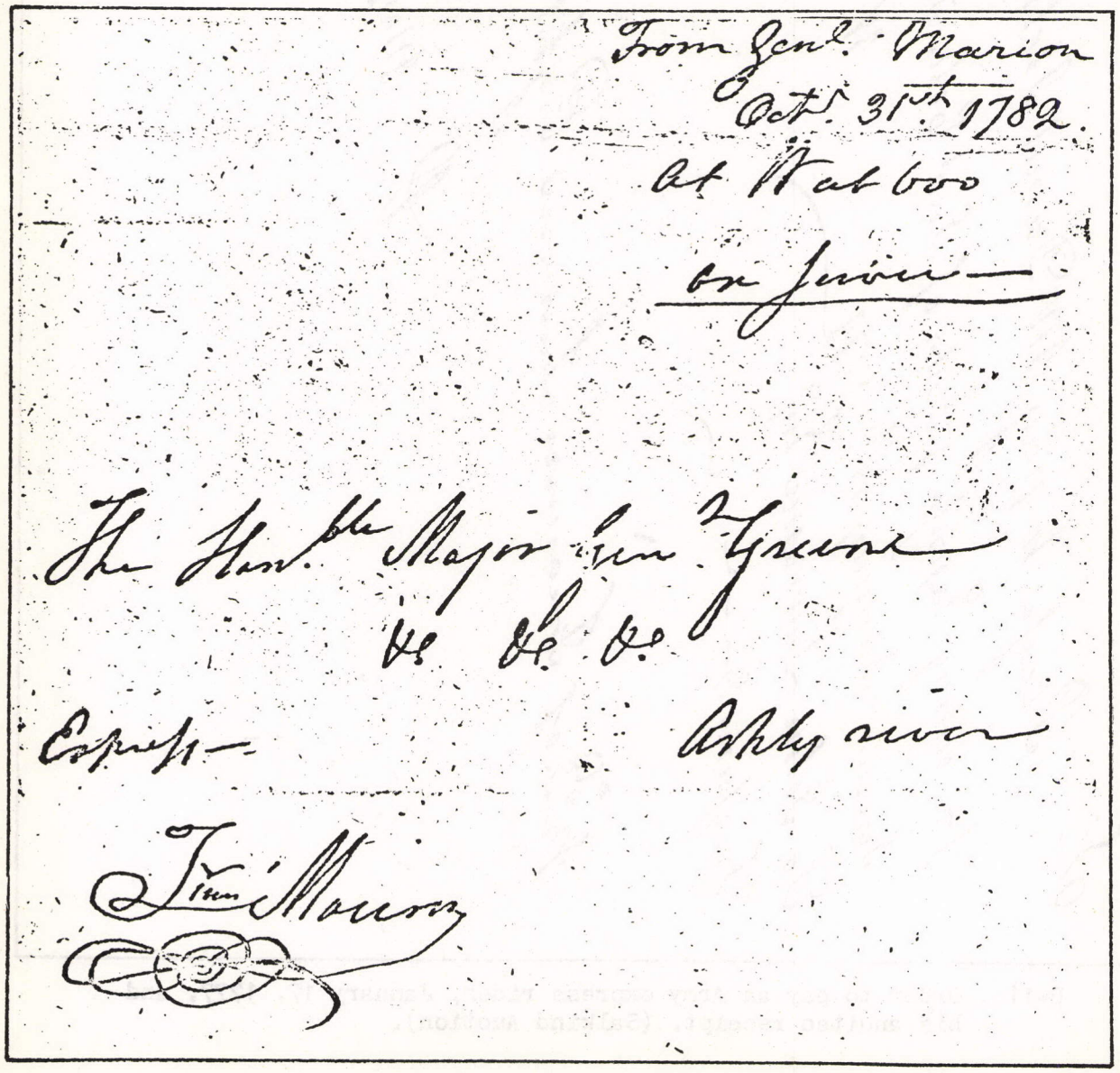
When no emergency called for such measures as suggested by Franklin the military mail was entrusted to the regular postal services and normal

B-11 . .Order to pay an Army express rider, January 17, 1777, and his audited receipt. (Salkind Auction).

rates of postage applied. Because of the long frontier where the enemy could attack the British command, normally located in New York, but at times in Albany, expected reports from outposts as far to the south as Georgia and as far norh as Oswego on Lake Ontario. It was a real challenge for Franklin and Hunter to meet the army's requirements.

On November 5, 1756 such a report was mailed from Charlestown, S.C. to General Loudoun, the commander in chief, at that time located in Albany. No land route being operable, the letter was sent by ship to Suffolk in Virginia. The postmaster there charged it 20 pennyweights, being a double letter (Part II, cover VA 27). It is a good example of the slow and expensive mid-century south-to-north mail which in this case covered a distance of close to one thousand miles.

Figure B-12 is a sample of a letter carried by an express rider employed by the Army. It was written by the cavalry commander



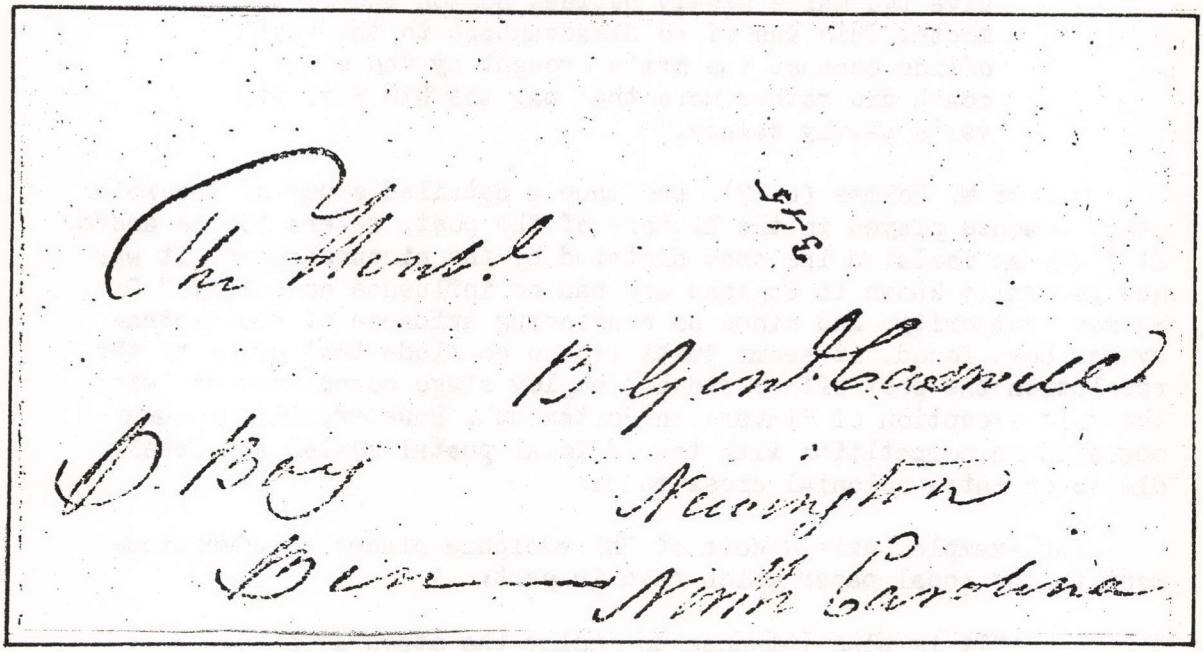
B-12. Watboo, S.C., October 31, 1782. Express from General Francis Marion to the Southern commander General Nathaneal Greene. (Huntington Library, San Marino). (HM. 22378)

General Francis Marion, who played a prominent role in the 1882 defense of South Carolina under the command of General Nathanael Greene.

The authorization for paying an Army express rider's wages and his audited receipt for the same is shown in figure B-11.

The men who carried "Exempt" mail had no official status whatsoever. The nature of the correspondence entrusted to them is described in the Chapter on American Ship Letters. According to the regulations letters were exempt from being handled by the postal monopoly which contained papers covering shipments of merchandise. Letters "sent by Friends or Messengers sent on purpose concerning the private Affair of any Person" (Queen Anne's postal law of 1711) were in the same category. However, one of the provisions was that no payment could be charged for the conveyance of such messages

Very few "exempt" letters of the period can be identified as such since they usually carried no markings. Figure B-12 shows one which was carried by a private rider.



B-13. Halifax, N.C., January 26, 1782 to Newington, N.C. by "Boy Ben". (North Carolina State Archives).

Many a letter was handled clandestinely, either by private carriers or by official post riders, who pocketed the money they charged. It is obvious that no letters conveyed by them can be identified as such.

The records speak of robberies to which the riders were exposed. Their number grew rapidly as the intensity grew by which the revolutionary was was fought. Many of these occurrences should be classified as enemy activities or as obstructive exploits carried

out by loyalists who disapproved of the rebel post office. Despatch boats which tried to keep the postal service operative between the northern colonies and those in the south were always in danger of being captured by British patrol vessels.

The stage coach was a relative late-comer in the postal service. This was partly due to the poor condition of the roads. But here and there, where a two- or four-wheeled carriage could pass stage drivers carried mail in competition with the unpopular British post office establishment. Hugh Finlay in his Journal on page 18 gives an account of the only coach line which operated on contract in colonial times:

> "One Stavers some years ago began to drive a stage coach between Portsmouth and Boston; his drivers hurt the office very much by carrying letters, and they are so artful that the post master could not detect them; it was therefore judged proper to take this man into the pay of the office, and to give two mails weekly between Boston and Portsmouth. This was of no disadvantage to the Post office because the mails brought by the stage coach did rather more than pay the £10 Str. Staver's yearly salary."

Oliver W. Holmes (b-17), who made a detailed study of the role stage coaches played in the history of the post, refers to the above. It " was an isolated instance dictated by the circumstances. It was not generally known in England and had no influence on policy." On Holmes' authority, and since no convincing evidence of the contrary has been found, it seems justified to conclude that prior to the revolution the post office did not employ stage coach drivers, with the sole exception of Stavers in Portsmouth. However, many a coach operated in competition with the official postal system and freely did so on intra-colonial cross roads.

For example Lewis Nicola of Philadelphia placed an advertisement in the local paper which read in part:

> "It is also intended to employ the stage as a regular Post; for which purpose letters will be received and delivered at the following places and prices."

The ad finished with the interesting statement:

> "Persons desirous of having their letters delivered in Philadelphia, without delay, must write in a corner of the direction side 'haste', and such letters shall be carried immediately after arrival, to their directions, in the same manner and rates as those from the 'Post-office, viz. 2 cop-

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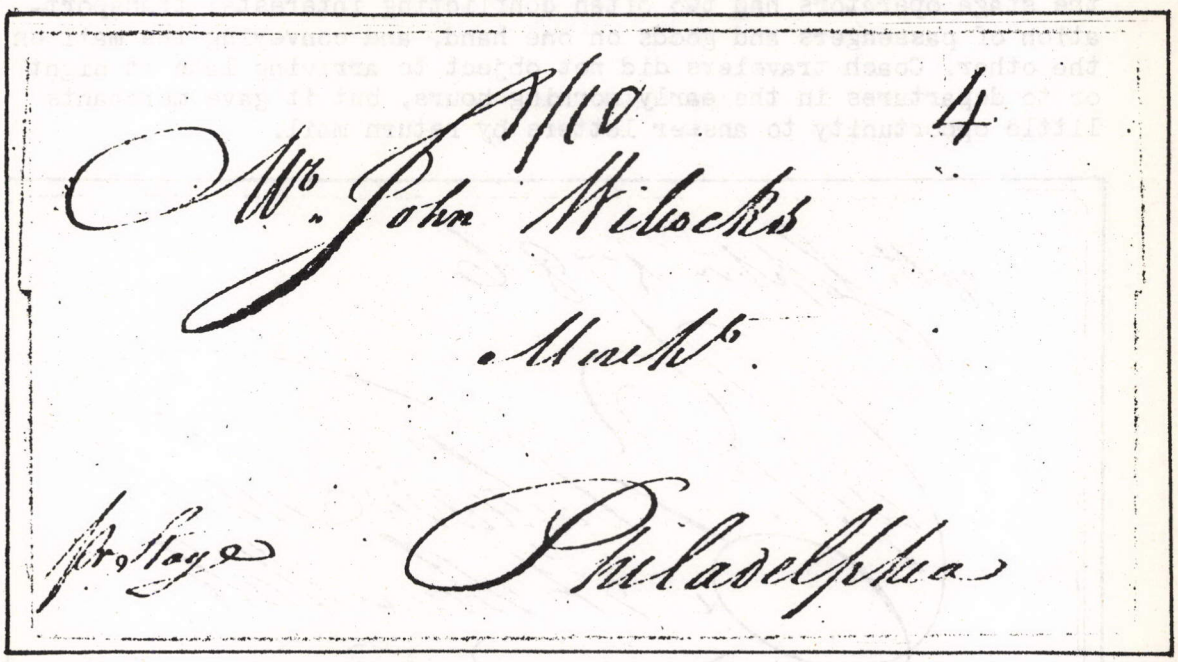
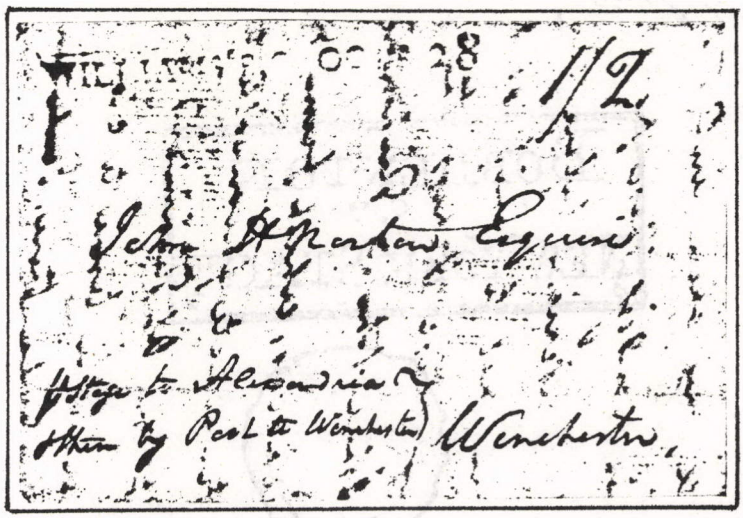
(b-17) Oliver W. Holmes: Shall Stagecoaches Carry the Mail ? William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. XX, 1963, pp. 555-573.

pers besides the postage." (b-18)

Nicola's coaches operated between Philadelphia and Reading, Pa.



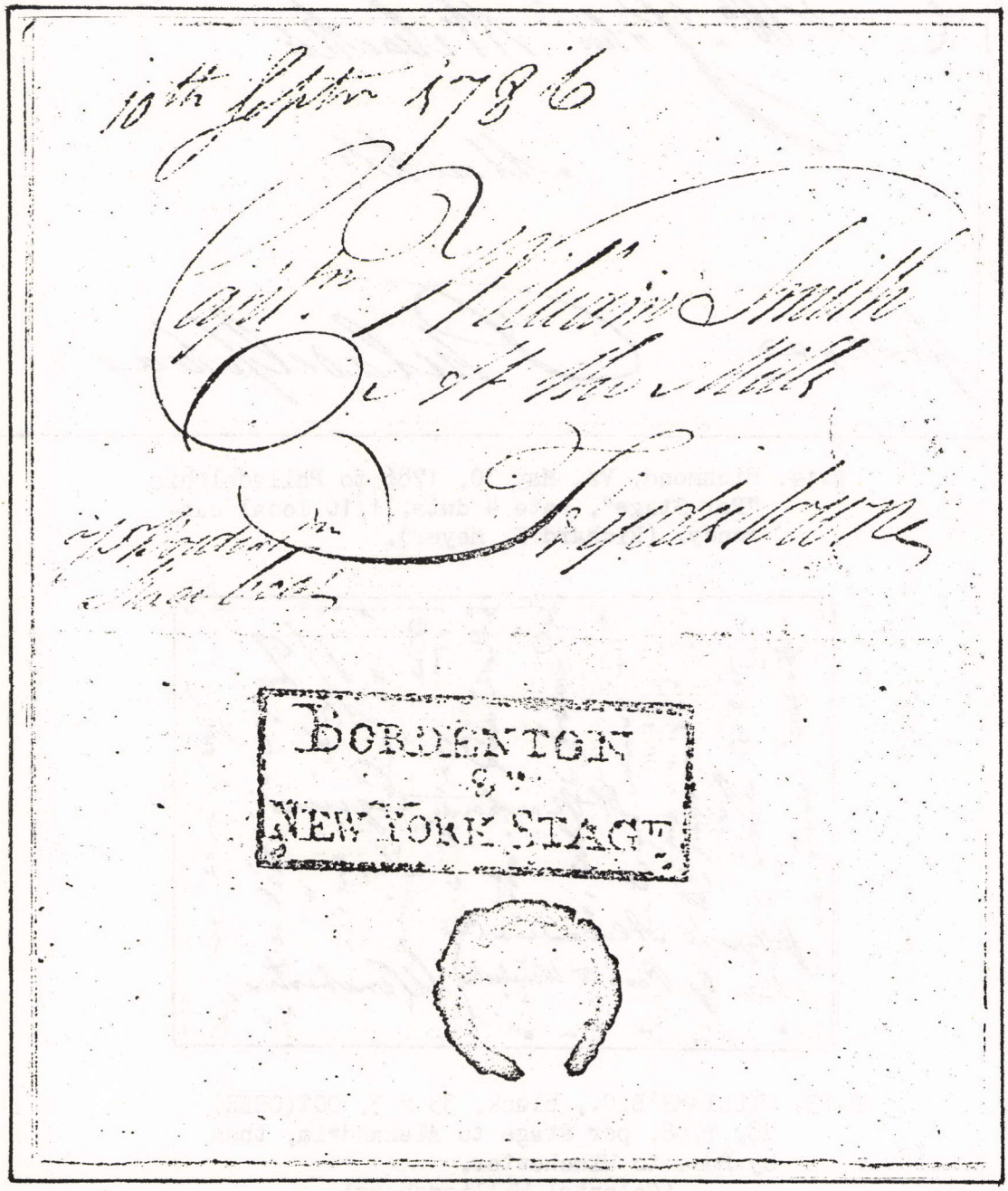
B-14. Richmond, Va. May 30, 1786 to Philadelphia "Per Stage", rate 4 dwts, 1/10 local currency. (Richard K. Meyer).



B-15. WILLIAMS'B.G., black, 33 x 3, OCT(OBER) 28, 1788, per stage to Alexandria, then by Post to Winchester.
(Colonial Williamsburg).

(b-18) Winfield J. Hain: Notes on Early Pennsylvania Postal History. American Philatelic Congress Book, 1948, p. 51. One copper = ½ penny.

In the late eighties the subject of "mail by stage coach" became a fairly hot issue of discussion which contributed to the resignation of the postmaster general, Ebenezer Hazard, who was opposed to the use of the stage lines. One of his main objections was that the stage operators had two often conflicting interests: transportation of passengers and goods on one hand, and conveying the mail on the other. Coach travelers did not object to arriving late at night or to departures in the early morning hours, but it gave merchants little opportunity to answer letters by return mail.

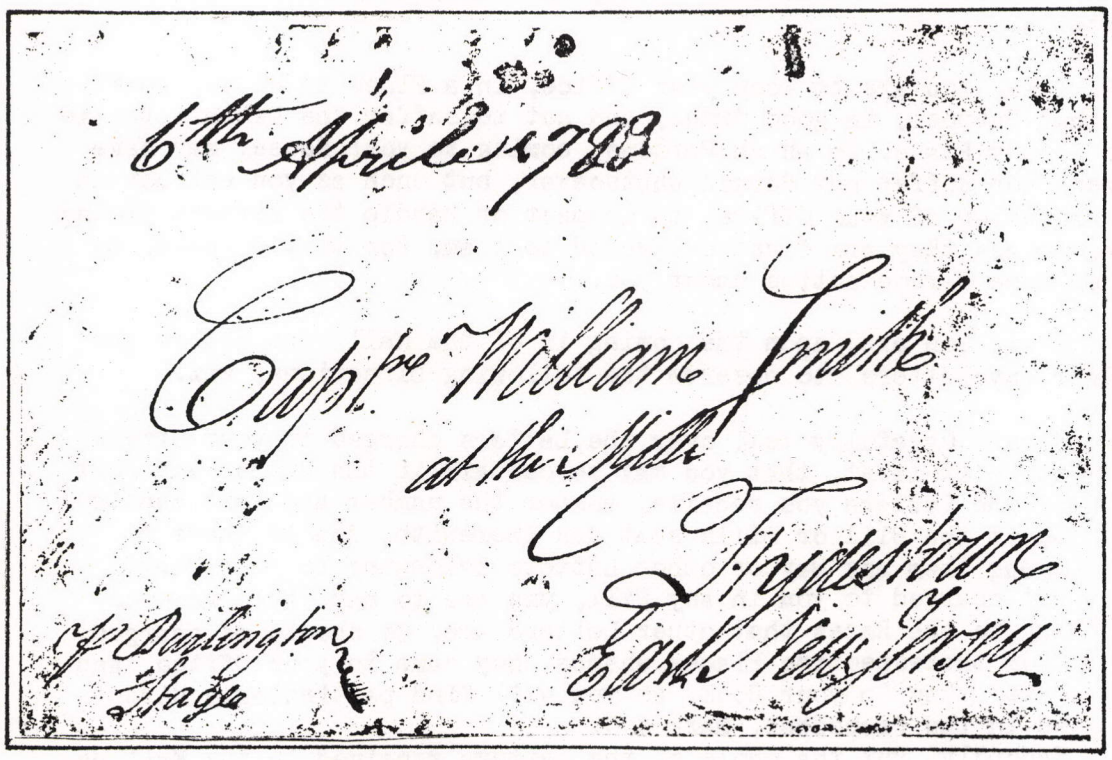


B-16. Philadelphia, September 10, 1786 per stage boat and coach to Hydestown, N.J. via Bordenton. (Faulstich - Siegel auction).

The letter of figure B-14 was carried by contractual stage, which is confirmed by the prevailing postal rate of 4 dwts. between Richmond and Philadelphia.

A second example of mail going by the stage is shown in figure B-15. It is a letter which followed the main postal road from Williamsburg to Alexandria and was carried by a post rider, but was transferred to a stage coach from there to its destination: Winchester. The date was October 23, 1788.

The attractive BORDENTON/&/NEW YORK STAGE marking on the reverse of a letter, shown in figure B-16, which was sent from Philadelphia to Hydestown (Hightstown) in New Jersey, is not a postmark. (b-19) The first phase of its voyage northward was by stage boat to Bordento(w)n, from where it was carried by coach to its destination, a place which was not located on the official post road. Consequently the rate marking of a normal piece of mail is absent. A similar letter which travelled the same route two years later does not have this private marking, but carries the manuscript certification tion: "p. Burlington Stage". (figure B-17).



B-17. Philadelphia, April 6, 1788, per Burlington Stage to Hydestown, N.J. (Faulstich - Siegel auction).

(b-19) Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe: The Colonial Posts in the U.S.A. London, 1967, p. 27.
E.N. Sampson: American Stampless Cover Catalog, Albany, 1971, p. 94.

ANNEX.

Instructions Given By Benjamin Franklin, and William Hunter, Esquires, His Majesty's Deputy Post-Masters General of all his Dominions on the Continent of North America, to ..... their Deputy Post-Master, for the Stage of ..... in the Province of .....

Imprimis, You are, previous to the entering upon your Office, to take the Oath required by the Act of the Ninth of Queen Anne (of which we have herewith sent you a Copy) before some one Justice of the Peace, for the County or Place where you reside; which, after being regularly certified, by the said Justice, you must return to our Comptroller at Philadelphia. And you are not to entrust or employ any Person or Persons under you, to receive, sort, mark, or deliver, any Letters or Pacquets or be any otherways concerned in the Management of your Office; unless such Person or Persons shall likewise have first taken the Oath above-mentioned, which you are also to send to our said Comptroller in like Manner as your own. And for the Care and Fidelity of such Person or Persons, so employed by you, you are to be accountable.

2. Item, You are to keep your Office, in a Place to be set apart for that Purpose, in good Order, and not to suffer the Letters to lie open in any Place, to which Persons, coming to your House, may have Access; nor suffer any Person whatsoever, but such as you entrust in the Execution of your Office, to inspect or handle the Letters at any Time, unless they are first delivered to them, for that Purpose, by you or some Person acting under you.

3. Item, You are, upon the coming in of the Mail, and before you deliver any Letters, to observe the following Directions, viz.

First, Carefully tell over the Letters charged to your Office twice at least, that you may be certain if the Number and Port of the Letters you receive, answer the number and Port mentioned in the Bill or Bills sent you therewith. And if there be among them any Way or other Letters belonging to your Stage, not charged to you in any Bill, you are to mark them according to the Rates that other Letters are, or should be charged, from therespective Places whence they came to your Office, and enter them in your Book, as you will find particularly directed in the Precedent, mark'd C.

Secondly, Put the whole of the Letters received in the Mail belonging to your Stage, tho' they are sent from different Offices, or are Way-Letters, into one Heap or Parcel.

Thirdly, Sort them alphabetically according to the Sir-names, and then enter them, in the same alphabetical Order, into a Book to be provided and kept for that Purpose only; and write the proper Date, and Names of the Places from whence received, ate the Head of the List; and also set the Pennyweights and Grains, and Value in Currency, of each Letter, against the respective Names, as you will see done in the Specimen sent

you herewith, mark'd A.
Fourthly, Having another Book, kept in the Manner as directed by particular Instructions sent you herewith, turn to the Account of Letters received into your Office (see the Precedent for this Account, mark'd C) and make the proper Entries.

4. Item, You are, when any of the Bills sent to you with Letters are overcharged, to mark on them those Parts that are so, and what they ought to have been; and preserve all the Bills you receive on a File. And when any Letters are overcharged, i.e. single Ones as Double, double Ones as Treble, &c. you are to make Allowances for such Overcharges to the Persons to whom the Letters are directed. And when any Letters are undercharged, double Ones as Single, treble Ones as Double, &c. you are to mark them as they ought to have been charged, and receive the Postage accordingly, taking Care to send a true Account thereof, by the first Post, in your Comptroller's Bill. And if there be, among the Letters charged to you, any which are not in your Delivery, and ought to have been sent to some other Place, you are then, if you know the proper Stage for their Delivery, to forward them there by the first Post; and if that Stage be farther distant from the Office they were first sent from than yours, you are to mark and charge them as they ought to have been mark'd and charg'd from thence, and mention them as forwarded in the Bill you send therewith; and you must likewise enter an Account of the Pennyweights and Grains of each Missent Letter so forwarded by you, in the Column for that Purpose; and note the same in your next Comptroller's Bill, that your Account may be credited therewith. And you are likewise to acquaint the Postmasters, from whose Offices any Bills of Letters may come over or under-charged, or missent to you, of the Mistakes they have made, by the first Post after you observe them, which you may do either on the Back of the Bills you send them, or by Letter, as is most convenient.

5. Item, You are, if you find the Post had been longer in riding his Stage than he ought, to examine him strictly as to the Cause of it; and if he cannot give any just Reason, you must, by the next Post, acquaint his Master with it, and write what he says, that the Cause of his Delay may be known.

6. Item, You are not to open or suffer to be opened any Mail or Bag of Letters, except such Bags as shallbe sent unto you with Letters to be delivered at your Stage, unless there be an urgent Necessity; and in that Case you must always seal up the Bag again, with the Seal of your Office, and send a Note therein, specifying the Reason why the said Bag was broke open.

7. Item, You are not to receive, or permit or consent to be received, at your Office, for the Port of any Letters or Pacquets, any Rates, but according to the Rates taxed or allowed for the Port of such Letters or Pacquets, in the Table of Rates herewith sent to you, which you are to hang up in your Office in a Frame, to be preserv'd for your Government, and the Satisfaction of all Persons paying such Postage.

8. Item, You are not to trust any Person whatsoever for the Postage

of Letters or Pacquets, but at your own Risque. And if any Sum, not exceeding Five Pounds Sterling, shall be due from any Person for Letters or Pacquets to them delivered by you, or which now is or shall be due for the Port of Letters or Pacquets by you or your Servants delivered to them, not exceeding that Value, you may recover the same by the afore-mentioned Act before Justices of the Peace, in the same Manner, and under the same Rules, as small Tithes are by the Laws of England to be recovered; and such Debts or Sums of Money are to be preferable in Payment, by the Person owing the same, or from whose Estate the same is or shall be due, before any Debt of any Sort to any private Person whatsoever.

9. Item, You are to cause all Letters and Pacquets, received by you for Persons living in Town, which remain uncalled for on those Days they are brought to the Office, to be carefully delivered the next Morning as directed, so that the Persons receiving them may have convenient Time to return their Answers to your Stage to go by the next Return of the Post; and you are to allow the Person employed by you to deliver Letters aforesaid, to receive of the Persons to whom he delivers them, for his own Use, One English Copper Halfpenny for each Letter, over and above the Postage charged thereon. And whenever any Letters remain in your Office undelivered one Month after you have received them, you are to take a List of Names of the Parties to whom the same are directed, and their Places of Abode, and publish it in one or all the News-Papers printed in your Province, if the Printers thereof send any any of their Papers in his Majesty's Mail. And all those Letters which remain undelivered two Months after such Publication, you are to send to the General Post-Office in Philadelphia, as Dead Letters, and your Account will be credited therewith accordingly; And if there be any particular Reason why any Letter was not delivered according to its Directions, mention the same on the Back of such Letter; and on each Bundle mark the Amount of Penny-weights and Grains it contains. If you omit sending the Dead Letters with your quarterly Account, you are to take Notice that you will have no Allowance made you for them till they are sent.

10. Item, You are to use your best Endeavours to prevent any private Collection of Letters, by any Person whatsoever, within any of the Towns or Places under your Care; and if you find any private Collectors of Letters or Pacquets, you are constantly to return the Names, and Places of Abode, of all such Persons making such Collections, to our Comptroller aforesaid.

11. Item, You are to doas much as in you lies, to collect all Letters and Pacquets within your said Stage, and the Districts thereof, to the End that they may be sent in his Majesty's Mails.

12. Item, You are, until you receive other Directions from us, to continue the Posts in the same Rout, and observe the same Method of conveying Letters by them, in the several Bags, as has been hitherto usual from your Office.

13. Item, You are not to deliver back any Letter put into your Of-

fice, unless you are sure it be the same Person who wrote or brought the same; and if the Person who brought the Letter be not the Writer thereof, and should afterwards come to demand it back again, you are not to deliver it unless he shall bring you the same Subscription, written with the same Hand, and the Impression of the same Seal, wherewith such Letter was superscribed and sealed.

14. Item, You are not to take Charge of, or send in the Mail, any Letters that have Money, Rings, Jewels, or any Thing else of Value, other than Paper or Parchment inclosed; but if any Persons apply to you to have such Things sent, you must acquaint them that they may, if they chuse to run the Risque, agree with the Post-rider for the same, it being allowed him as a Perquisite, to carry those Kind of Things for such Persons as chuse to entrust him therewith; but that you do not in wise (?) undertake to be accountable for the safe Deliverance thereof.

15. Item, You are to permit any Person who desires it, to pay the Postage of any Letter he may put into your Office to be sent per Post; and you are to mark the same as Paid, and mention them as such in the Bill or Charge you send therewith; and also send, from Time to Time, in the Comptroller's Bill, a true and exact Account of the Number of Pennyweights and Grains that shall be so paid to you.

16. Item, You are, upon making up of the Mail, to observe the following Directions, viz.

First, Carefully sort the Letters, according to the several Stages they are directed for, putting all those for each Stage into a separate Heap or Parcel.

Secondly, Write on them the Name or Mark of your Stage, and the proper Rate, according to the Table of Rates sent you herewith, being strictly careful, that you neither over or under-rate them. And you are to observe that every single Piece of Paper, however small, or large, is to be tax'd as a single Letter, unless there are wrote on it more Letters than one, or Bills of Exchange, Merchant Accompts, Invoices, Bills of Lading, Writs or Proceedings at Law; in that Case every Letter, Bill, Accompt, Invoice, &c. is to be rated and taxed as so many several and distinct Letters, tho' wrote on one and the same Piece of Paper; But Letters inclosing several Patterns of Cloth, Silk, Stuff, &c. not exceeding one Ounce Weight, to pay only as a double Letter, or two Pieces of Paper.

Thirdly, Sort the Letters of each Parcel, into Single, Double, Treble, and Pacquets, Paid and Unpaid, Ship and Inland; and then enter them in that Order in the Bill or Charge to be sent therewith; and date, and sign the Bill with your Name.

Fourthly, Then tie up the Letters of each Stage in separate Bundles, and enter the Amount of each Bill in your Books, as you will see done in the Precedent, marked Letter B, sent you herewith; and then putting the Letters into their respective Bags, tie the same, and seal them with the Seal of your Office.

17. Item, You are not hereafter to suffer any Letter or Pacquet, to

pass in his Majesty's Mail Post-free, unless you receive a special Order from us for that Purpose. And hereupon we now direct, that all Deputy Post-Masters, bearing Commission immediately from us shall have all the Letters to and from themselves, Postfree; always meaning that they shall not, under Colour of this Privilege, convey Letters for other People, who otherwise would be chargeable for the Postage thereof.

18. Item, You are not, out of Friendship or Compliment to any Person whatsoever, to delay his Majesty's Post one Quarter of an Hour, beyond the usual and fixed Times of his Departure.

19. Item, You are to direct the Post-riders, who go from your Stage, to wind their Horns once every five Miles, and three Times in every Town or Village, and upon the Meeting any Passenger on the Road; and also on his arriving at, and Half an Hour before his Departure from your Office.

20. Item, You are to keep a just and true Account of all Monies whatsoever received by you, for the Port of Letters or Pacquets; and at the End of each Quarter, That is to say, at Ladyday, Midsummer, Michaelmas, and Christmas, you are to make out a true and exact Account thereof, with your Disbursements, &c. in the Manner as is done in the Precedent sent you herewith, marked Letter D, and send the same to our Comptroller, at Philadelphia, with the Ballance thereof, either in Gold or Silver, or in the current Money of the Province wherein he resides, or in good Bills of Exchange, to be allowed of by him, and payable upon Sight in the said Province. For your Ease in making out this Account, youhave printed Forms sent you.

21. Item, You are strictly enjoined, not to take into your Service, any Rider who hath served any other Post-Master as a Servant to ride, without a Certificate, signed by the Master whom he last served, signifying that he had behaved himself honestly, and been diligent in the Performance of his Duty; And taking a Rider without such Certificate, you shall be answerable for all Faults committed by him with respect to the Post-Office. On employing any Rider, you are to cause him to sign the Bond, and take the Oath sent you herewith for that Purpose; you are to be particularly careful that such Rider perform his Duty in every Respect, and on his Failure, to sue his Bond, and prosecute him for Breach of Oath, as you shall see Cause.

22. Item, You are constantly to observe whether the Bags coming to your Office for your Stage, be sealed with the respective Seals of the Offices from whence they came; and to seal, with a fair impression of the Seal of your stage, the several Bags which you send from thence.

23. Item, You are diligently and faithfully to demean yourself in your said Employment, and to the utmost of your Ability and Skill, by all lawful Ways and Means, to promote His Majesty's Service in your Place, and from Time to Time to keep and observe all the abovementioned Orders and Instructions, and all such other Rules, Orders, Directions

and Instructions, concerning the Management in your Place, as you shall receive from us, or our Comptroller aforesaid. And if any Misdemeanor shall be proved against you, you are quietly to submit, and render up your said Place, when we shall signify the same to you under our Hands and Seal of Office, notwithstanding any Agreement between us and you at the Entry into your said Employment.

B.Franklin
W. Hunter.

The above Post Office Instructions were undated. However, there are several Indications which point to one of the late months in 1753, shortly after Franklin and Hunter were appointed Deputy Postmasters General in America. Ebenezer Hazard, who became Postmaster General of the United Colonies in 1782, issued Instructions to the Postmasters of his own, the substance and even the wording of which closely resemble Franklin and Hunter's set of general orders.

It is significant to note that during a time span of thirty years the cumbrous and time-consuming system of processing the mail had not changed. Apparently there still was no need for a more efficient procedure than that descibed in Items 3 and 4.

C. The Grand Line of Post

Alex.L.ter Braake

After New York's Governor Francis Lovelace had established a short-lived postal service (c-1) between Manhattan and Boston in January 1673, several provincial administrations struggled with the idea of a letter mail between north and south, between Nova Scotia and the Carolinas", which was their hoped-for goal. Governor Thomas Dongan of New York in 1684 was one of them, and his colleague Edmond Andros trod in his footsteps. Although they were able to arouse some interest for their plans in London, they never succeeded. Too many obstacles were in their way.

It actually took one century before regularly scheduled north-south postal services were established and even then they were far from reliable. Moreover one has to keep in mind that when a Bostonian of the seventeenth century has been quoted in the literature of speaking of "the southward" he had something in mind which was considerably different from what his grandson, or even his son, would have called "down south".

Announcements regarding long distance postal services of old often were very unreliable. In almanacs, and even on the pages of legislative journals, the existance of the grand postal route was frequently proclaimed, but here, as so often, the wish was the father of the thought. For instance the Virginia Gazette of May 25, 1739 optimistically announced that postmaster General Spotswood had successfully organized a continuous post southward from Williamsburg to Charlestwon, and four weeks later the same paper carried the following item:

"Williamsburg, June 22, 1739.

"This is to give notice to all Persons that have occasion to Correspond to the southward, That a Post-Stage has been some time carried on, and is still continued, from Williamsburg to Edenton, in North Carolina, to carry Letters and Packets. And that There is now begun, and will be carried on, once a month, Post Stages from Edenton aforesaid to Cape Fear, and from thence to Charles-Town, in South Carolina: So that now a Communication may be carried on, by Post, all the way from Piscataway and Boston in New England, thro' the principal Towns and Places in New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina to Charles-Town in South

---

(c-1) Stokes: The Iconography of Manhattan Island, Vol.IV, Pl. 15.

> Carolina, and from thence there are frequent opportunities to Georgia: Which must certainly be a Great benefit to the Public, and particularly to the trading part of it.
>
> The Printer of this Paper keeps the Post Office in Williamsburg, for the reception and dispatch of Letters from and to the Southward. The Southern Post will set off from Williamsburg as soon as the Northern Post arrives, which will be on Tuesday, the 3rd., or Wednesday the 4th. of next month; and so will continue from that time, to go constantly once a month, Summer and Winter."

Williamsburg's postmaster, William Parks, must have been seriously disappointed when he realized how premature his announcement to the letter-writing public had been. On the following pages a more realistic picture of the north-south postal service vice versa will be found.

In 1756 this particular postal route provoked a note of optimism from Henry Laurens, a prominent South Carolina business man, who later became President of the Continental Congress. In a letter, dated October 2 of that year he wrote to a colleague: "Letters will now come pretty expeditiously from any part of North America as a Post is lately established that bring Letters all the way from New England." But his elation soon evaporated and his criticism of the north-south letter service was in sharp contrast to the expressed enthusiasm to his friend.

Postal history publications often accepted such statements as established facts and repeated the lofty words without checking. Actually decades and other decades went by before a piece of mail could be carried all the way except by ship. The few that came through were the exceptions.

Locally, within the bounderies of a single colony, several attempts were made with some success to organize a post, to engage riders, or to burden private persons, or public officials, such as constables, with the task of carrying letters from place to place.

W. Harrison Bayles, writing on the "Postal Service in the Thirteen Colonies" (c-2), reports that in 1633 Joshua Pratt, a constable, carried messages and letters on official business to places within the colony of Plymouth and to neighboring colonies, and that ten years later a messenger, John Holmes by name, billed the same colony for one pound sterling for bringing a message to Sandwich and to Scituate (see map of figure C-1).

From the fact that such bills were submitted for payment, which were officially recorded, one must conclude that letters actually had been carried and delivered.

In the first volume of Hening's Statutes at Large, page 436, Act X the Commonwealth of Virginia has been recorded, which deals with the "Dispatch of Publique Letters". It is dated March 1657-8

(c-2) The Journal of American History, Vol.5, No. 3 (1911).

and reproduced in figure C-2.

Four years later this legislative measure was replaced by Act XC (c-3), which by its punitive provisions underscored the difficulties that were encountered in carrying out the Virginia postal scheme. This Act is shown in figure C-3.

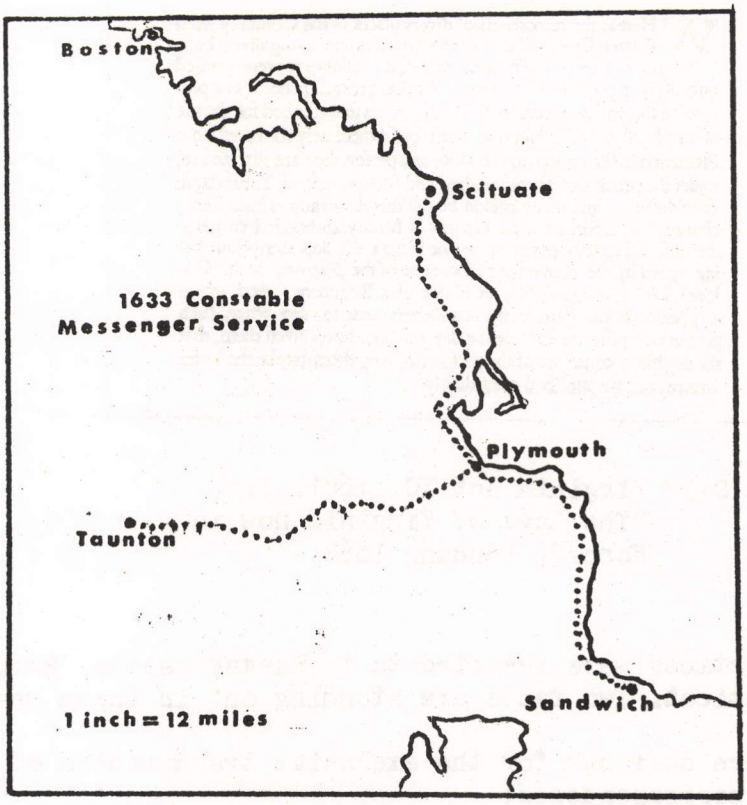


Figure C-1

ACT X.

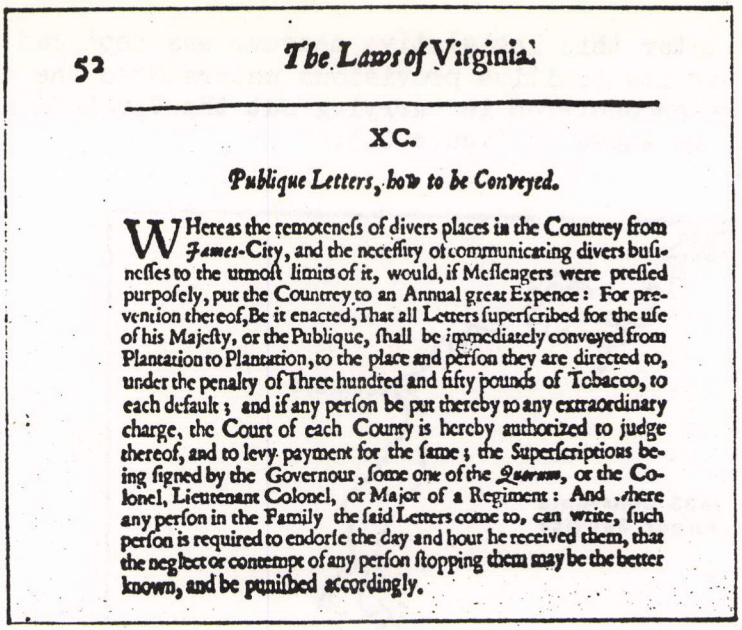
Dispatch of Publique letters.

Letters superscribed "for the public service" to be immediately conveyed from plantation to plantation. Penalty for neglect. Extraordinary charges to be defrayed by the counties. By whom superscription to be signed.

THAT all letters superscribed for the publique service shall be immediately conveyed from plantation to plantation, to the place and person directed, vnder the pennaltie of one hogshead of tobacco, for each default, and if any extraordnary charge arise thereby, the com'rs. of each county are hereby authorized to judge thereof and leavie payment for the same: These superscriptions are to be signed by the Governour, Councill or Secrettarie or any comission of the quorum or any of the comittee appointed for the militia.

C-2. Virginia Act X of March 1657/8.

(c-3) The Pageant of America. Independence Edition, 1927. p. 219.



52 *The Laws of* Virginia.

XC.

Publique Letters, how to be Conveyed.

WHereas the remoteneſs of divers places in the Countrey from *James*-City, and the neceſſity of communicating divers buſineſſes to the utmoſt limits of it, would, if Meſſengers were preſſed purpoſely, put the Countrey to an Annual great Expence: For prevention thereof, Be it enacted, That all Letters ſuperſcribed for the uſe of his Majeſty, or the Publique, ſhall be immediately conveyed from Plantation to Plantation, to the place and perſon they are directed to, under the penalty of Three hundred and fifty pounds of Tobacco, to each default; and if any perſon be put thereby to any extraordinary charge, the Court of each County is hereby authorized to judge thereof, and to levy payment for the ſame; the Superſcriptions being ſigned by the Governour, ſome one of the *Quorum*, or the Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, or Major of a Regiment: And where any perſon in the Family the ſaid Letters come to, can write, ſuch perſon is required to endorſe the day and hour he received them, that the neglect or contempt of any perſon ſtopping them may be the better known, and be puniſhed accordingly.

C-3. Virginia Act XC, 1661. From "The Laws of Virginia now in Force", London, 1662.

Similar practices were resorted to in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Connecticut. Two facts are standing out in these regulations:

1. they were designed for the exclusive transmission of official correspondence;
2. they were limited to postal intercourse within the territory of each individual colony.

Private interests in using the posts were badly neglected. It took a long time before people expressed their concern. Finally in 1677 the General Court in Boston received a petition from the local merchants, reading:

"To the Honourable General Court now sitting in Boston.

May 23rd, 1677.

We whose names are under written, hearing many complaints made by Merchants and others, and several of us being sensible of the loss of letters, whereby Merchants especially, with their friends and employers in forraigne parts are greatly damnified; many times the letters imposted and throwne upon tha Exchange so that who will may take them up; no person without some satisfaction being willing to trouble their houses therewith; so that letters of great moment are frequently lost: - our humble

> request, therefore, to this Honoured Court is, that they will please to depute some meet person to take in and convey letters according to directions and the Honoured Court sett the prices on letters, and state that affaire. And if this Honoured Court please we suppose Lt. Richard Way may be a fit person for that service." (c-4)

As a result John Hayward,"the Scrivenor", became the first postmaster of Boston.

The Pennsylvania Act of September 22, 1676, for the first time pays attention to "our Neighbours Colonyes", and in July, 1683 William Penn took steps to provide for the transmission of private letters. At that time the Jerseys and Delaware were parts of the Quaker colony. Winfield Hain gives the following description of its first north-south postal service:

> "Henry Waldy of Tacony (now a part of Philadelphia) was given authority to conduct the service and to supply passengers with horses from Philadelphia to New Castle or to the Falls (referring to the Falls-on-the-Delaware near Trenton). The post left once a week and was to be fully published 'on the meeting-house door and other public places'. The Waldy post office was located at the sign of the Death of the Fox, in Strawberry Alley in Philadelphia. Although limited in scope, being merely an attempt to satisfy a local need, the Quaker post was considered one of the most successful of its kind in the colonies." (c-5)

This quotation may give the impression that this service was somewhat of an equivalent to the Canadian "Poste aux Chevaux", which provided the traveler with a horse, but the fact that rates from 3 to 9 pence per single letter were established proves that it took care of the mail as well.

The efforts to establish letter contact between distant places on the North American continent date back to the young colonial era when one could hardly speak of postal services, even in their most primitive form. The extremely poor condition of whatever overland routes existed, blockaded as they were by dense forests, wide rivers and estuaries, and by the unfriendly attitude of the Indians, caused the early correspondent to entrust his occasional letter to the waterways. The mighty Hudson, then called the Maurits (c-6), or North River, which had carried the settlers to the banks of the Aesophus and the Catskill, and as far north as Albany and to Canadian habitations (c-7), became the channel for the meager flow of letters, which gave those sturdy colonists their contact with Nieuw Amsteram and the outside world.

(c-4) Albert E. Palmerlee: The American Posts, 1639-1692. Weekly Philatelic Gossip, September 7, 1957, p. 55.

(c-5) Winfield J. Hain: Notes on Early Pennsylvania Postal History. The American Philatelic Congress Book, 1948. pp. 42-51.

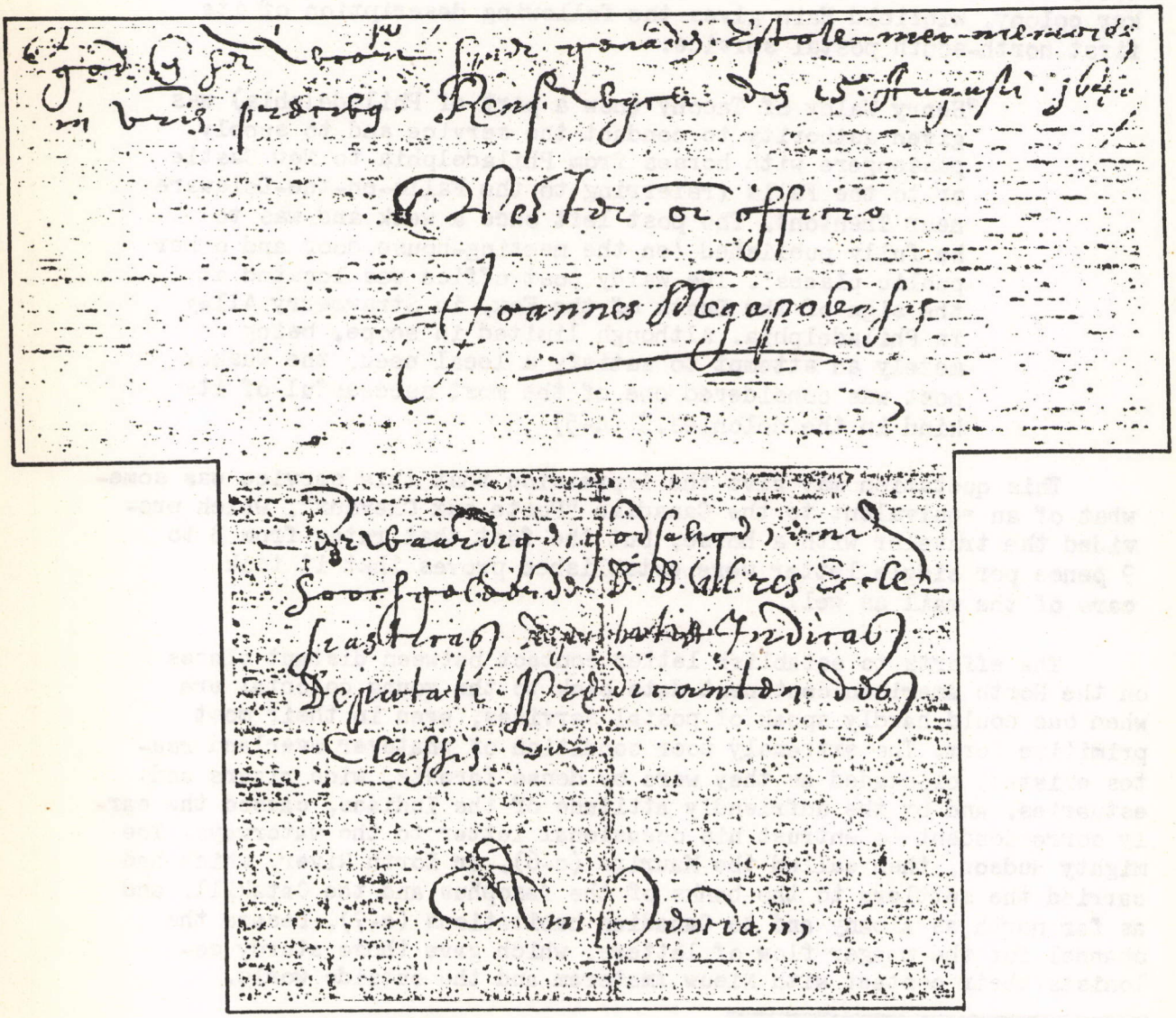
(c-6) Dutch names are given in the original spelling.

(c-7) C.M.Hahn: The Colonial Great North Post. The American Philatelist, October, 1973. pp. 901-918.

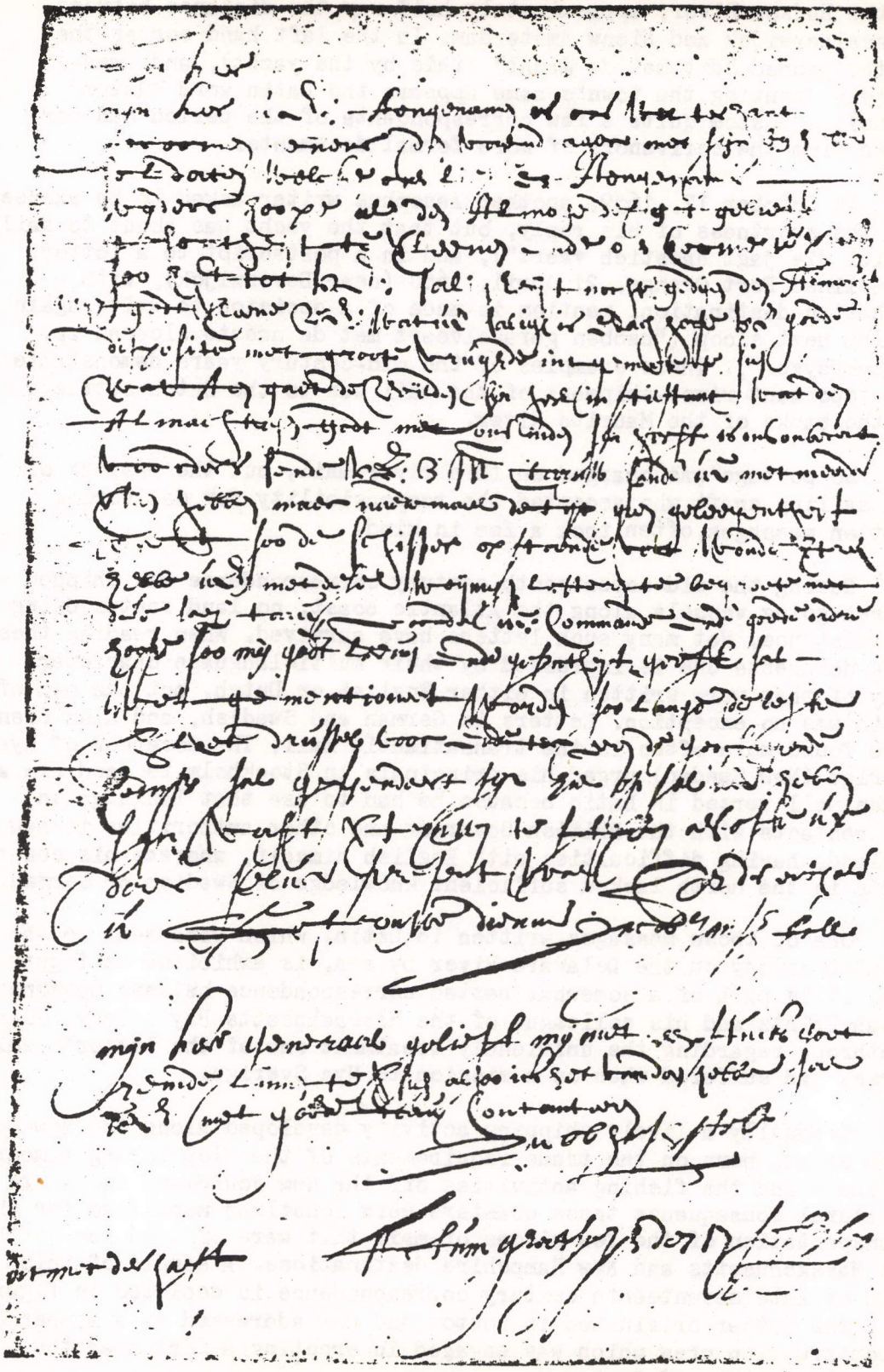
Sloops and yachts and flyboats plied the river up and down in ever increasing numbers, carrying peltries and other local products, food and merchandise, and an occasional letter. Some vessels sped from landing to landing. Larger ones often sailed directly to and from Beverwijck, near the important settlement of Rensselaerwijck, which could be reached from Nieuw Amsterdam in five days with fair winds, and even in seven when the winds were adverse.

As a sample of such correspondence the address side and the bottom part of a letter by the Rev. Joannes Megapolensis, the militant pastor who became known for his aggressive opposition to the ruling governor, are depicted in figure C-4. Its last line reads:

"... Rens.wijck, de 15 Augusti, 1648."



C-4. Rensselaerwijck, August 15, 1648, to Amsterdam, the Netherlands. (New Brunswick Theological Seminary).



C-5. Groot Aesophus, September 17, 1659, to Nieuw Amsterdam. Met de jacht. (New York State Archives).

Similarly figure C-5 shows a letter from Groot Aesophus and dated September 17, 1659. This settlement was located on the west bank of the Hudson River, approximately half way the distance between Rensselaerwijck and Nieuw Amsterdam. In the left hand corner the writer penned "dit met de Jacht" (this by the yacht), and immediately fronting the town's name appears the Latin word "Actum" (done), a custom quite a few correspondents of the period had borrowed from the scrivenors of more formal documents.

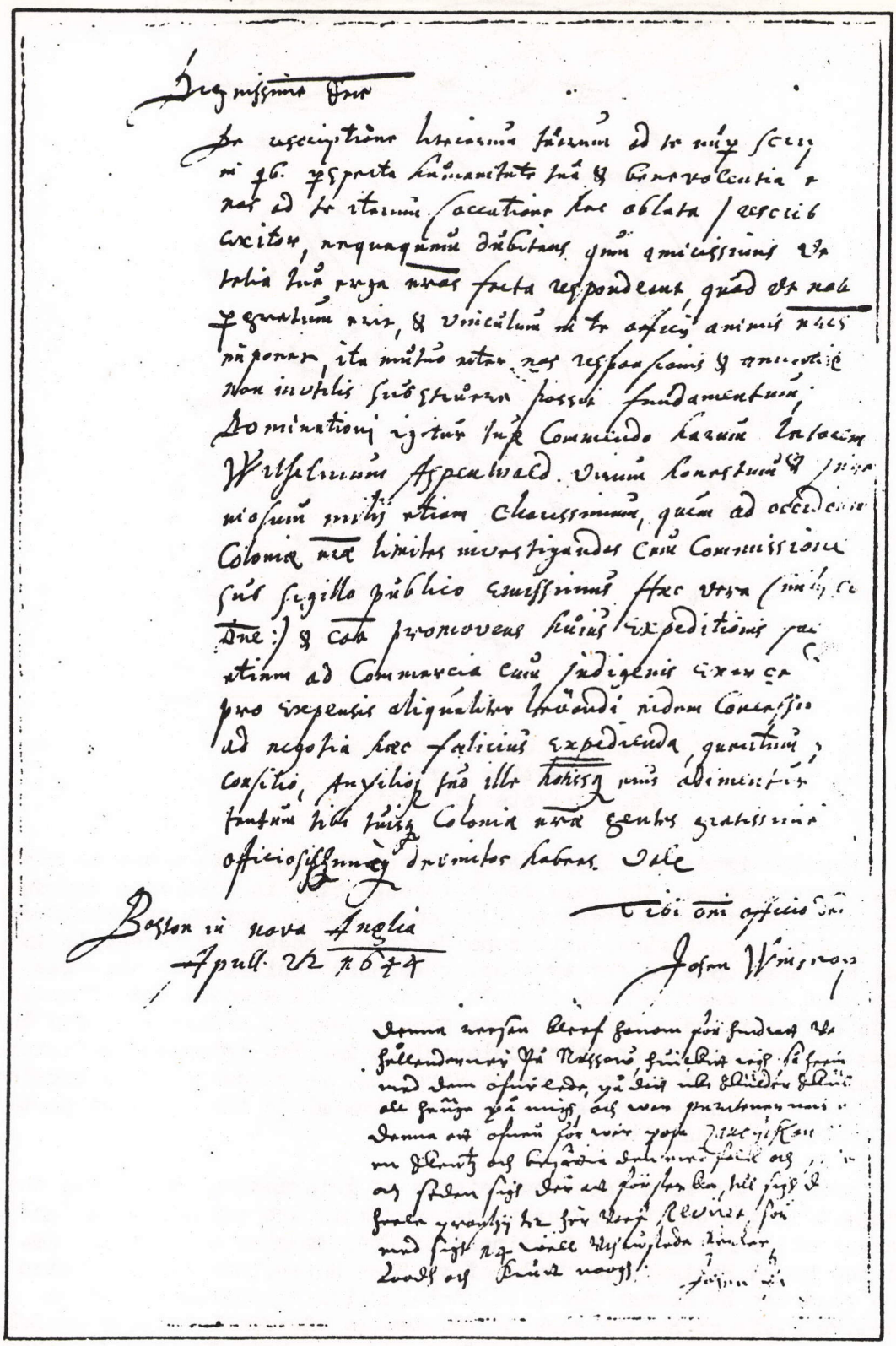
On October 17, 1659, another Aesophus writer asked to be excused for the shortness of his reply, but that the yacht was about to sail ("wiel die jagt haestich vaert"), and in a postscript to a letter, date-lined Fort Orange, 21 April, 1660 (near Beverwijck), with a Manhattan destination, mention is made of a decision to write again by the next sloop ("hebben geresolveert met de naeste sloepen ... te schreyve."). These examples of the mid-century years demonstrate how important river-shipment of the mail was to the Dutch settlers on the banks of the Maurits River.

No postage was charged on this river mail, but the masters of the sailing craft who accepted the responsibility for delivering written messages, often took a fee in kind.

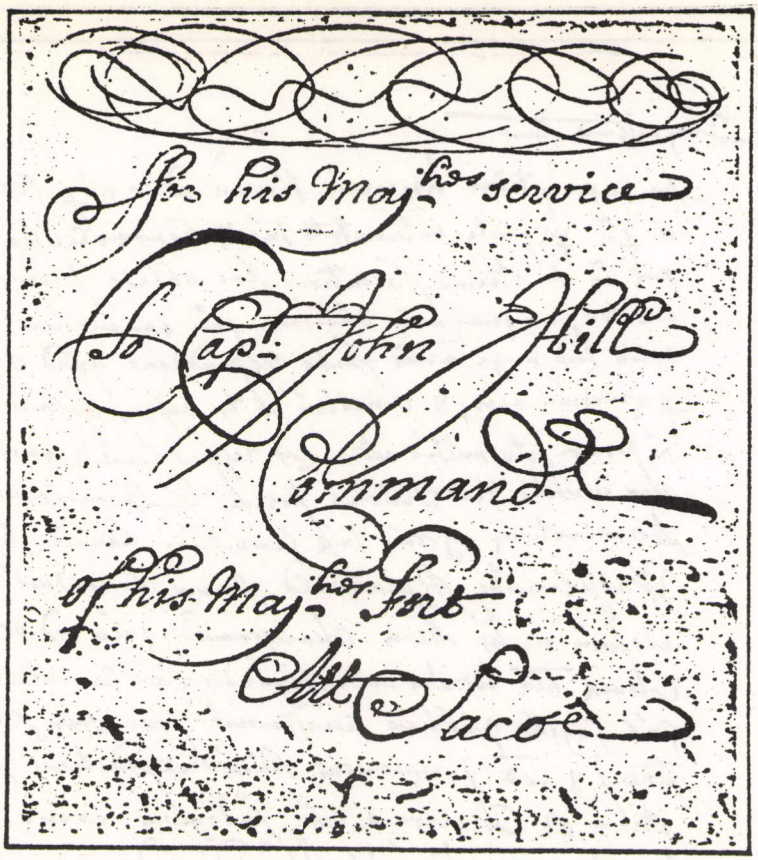
During the mid-seventeenth century correspondence was shipped by sea-going vessels along the Atlantic coast, no land routes being in existence. Not many such letters have survived. When reading these rare documents one is impressed by their multi-language character. Many of them were written in either English or Dutch, but the use of Latin was no exception. Letters in German and Swedish, and also French were found more often in the transatlantic mail. The Governor of Nya Sverige (New Sweden) urged his principals in Stockholm to send him a a man well versed in Latin because he had to use that language in his contacts with the British Governor and other authorities in New England, having difficulties with English himself, whereas his counterparts in the north lacked sufficient knowledge of Swedish or German.

One of those messages written in Latin, which were sent to the Swedish colony on the Delaware River by sea, is exhibited in figure C-6. It is part of a somewhat heated correspondence between Governor Johan Printz and his colleague of the Massachusetts Bay colony, John Winthrop, regarding the unfriendly treatment one of the latter's emissaries had suffered when on a mission to Nya Sverige.

Gradually a lively shipping activity developed along the New England coast, born on the trade requirements of the flourishing timber business and the fishing activities off the New Foundland banks. As a natural consequence these coasters were sometimes mobilized for the transportation of the few pieces of mail that were offered for northern Massachusetts and New Hampshire destinations. A sample of this kind of late seventeenth century correspondence is depicted in figure C-7. The letter originated in Boston and was addressed to a member of a construction crew which was engaged in erecting a fort near the coastal township of Saco.



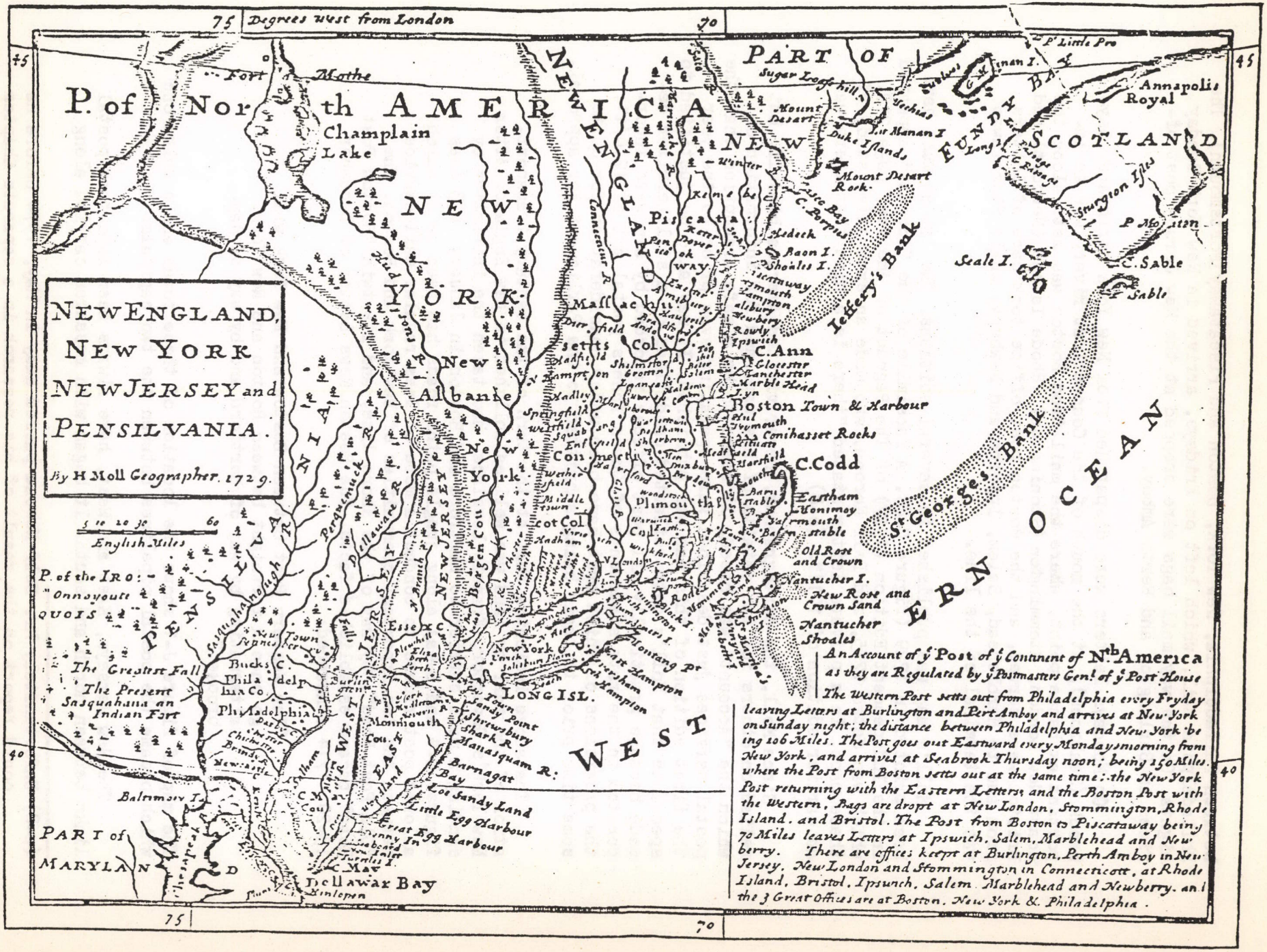
C-6. Boston in Nova Anglia (New England), April 22, 1644 by governor John Winthrop to governor Johan Printz, Tinicum Island in Nya Sverige. (Riksmuseet Stockholm).



C-7. Boston, October 18, 1699. For his Majesties Service, to Saco, Me. (Private collection).

However important these early experiments were in order to meet local requirements, the real break-through came in 1693 when Andrew Hamilton undertook to organize a colonial postal system on behalf of Thomas Neale, and tried, with considerable success, to integrate all that had been done so far by local governors' initiative. This was a plan that had received the Crown's blessing and support (see Chapter on Andrew Hamilton). For the first time a serious effort was made to organize the post on an inter-colonial basis. Its principal deficiency was the lack of cooperation by Virginia, which could not subscribe to a monopoly. Moreover Jamestown was inimical to the rates of postage proposed by Hamilton.

Some of the most important pieces of information concerning the movement of the early eighteenth century mail are contained in "An Account of ye Posts of ye Continent of Nth. America as they are Regulated by ye Postmasters Genl. of ye Post House," which was printed on a road map by Herman Moll, a Dutch-English cartographer. An exhaustive study of Moll's work as related to the American post by Delf Norona was in preparation in the form of a separate Chapter for this book, when the untimely death of the experienced postal historian prevented its completion. Moll's account covers the postal services


75 Degrees west from London 70
45
40
P. of North AMERICA
NEW ENGLAND
NEW YORK
PENSILVANIA
NEW JERSEY
WEST JERSY
EAST JERSY
PART of MARYLAND
PART OF NOVA SCOTIA
NEW SCOTLAND
Champlain Lake
Hudsons R.
Connecticut R.
Delaware R.
Susquehanah R.
Pergamuck R.
Albanie
New York
Boston Town & Harbour
Connihasset Rocks
C. Ann
C. Codd
C. Sable
Sable I.
Annapolis Royal
Mount Desart
Mount Desart Rock
Seal I.
Jeffery's Bank
St. George's Bank
ATLANTICK OCEAN
Long Isl.
Nantucher I.
New Rose and Crown Sand
Nantucher Shoales
Old Rose and Crown
Delaware Bay
Barnagat Bay
Little Egg Harbour
Great Egg Harbour
Lot Sandy Land
Monmouth
Shrewsbury
Shark R.
Hanasquam R.
Sandy Point
Burlington
Philadelphia
Bucks
Chester
Essex
Middlesex
Monmouth Co.
Salem
Gloucester
Manchester
Marble Head
Lyn
Plimouth
Barnstable
Yarmouth
Eastham
Monimoy
Piscataway
Kenebeck R.
Penobscot R.
Casco
Merrimack R.
Winter
Duke Islands
Sturgeon Isles
P. Mouton
Fort Mothe
Sugar Loaf hill
Mallachusetts Bay
Connecticut Col.
Hadley
Springfield
Westfield
Northampton
Middletown
Woodstock
Warwick
Rehoboth
Taunton
Bristol
Swansey
Rhode Island
Newport
Stonington
Block I.
Montaug Pt
East Hampton
Southampton
Southold
Huntington
Oyster Bay
New York
Elizabeth Town
Newark
Woodbridge
Piscataway
Perth Amboy
Burlington
Trenton
Salem
Cohansey
Cape May
Turtles I.
Sinnepuxent Inlet
Assateague I.
Chincoteague
Balrimore I.
Kent Co.
Queen Anne Co.
Talbot Co.
Dorchester Co.
Somerset Co.
Worcester Co.
Newcastle
Chichester
Brandywine R.
Christine R.
Elk R.
Bohemia R.
Susquehanah R.
Patapsco R.
Gunpowder R.
Patuxent R.
Potomack R.
Rappahannock R.
Chesapeak Bay
Virginia
Maryland
Pennsylvania
New Jersey
Connecticut
Rhode Island
Massachusetts
Nova Scotia
New Scotland
Fundy Bay
Long I.
Manan I.
Duke Islands
Little Pro
Annapolis Royal
Sturgeon Isles
P. Mouton
C. Sable
Sable I.
Seal I.
Jeffery's Bank
St. George's Bank
ATLANTICK OCEAN
NEW ENGLAND, NEW YORK NEW JERSEY and PENSILVANIA.
By H Moll Geographer. 1729.
5 10 20 30 60
English Miles
P. of the IROQUOIS
"Onnoyoute
The Greatest Fall
The Present Susquahana an Indian Fort
An Account of ye Post of ye Continent of Nrh America as they are Regulated by ye Postmasters Genl of ye Post House
The Western Post setts out from Philadelphia every Fryday leaving Letters at Burlington and Perth Amboy and arrives at New York on Sunday night; the distance between Philadelphia and New York being 106 Miles. The Post goes out Eastward every Mondays morning from New York, and arrives at Seabrook Thursday noon; being 150 Miles. where the Post from Boston setts out at the same time: the New York Post returning with the Eastern Letters and the Boston Post with the Western, Bags are dropt at New London, Stommington, Rhode Island, and Bristol. The Post from Boston to Piscataway being 70 Miles leaves Letters at Ipswich, Salem, Marblehead and Newberry. There are offices keept at Burlington, Perth Amboy in New Jersey, New London and Stommington in Connecticott, at Rhode Island, Bristol, Ipsuich, Salem, Marblehead and Newberry, and the 3 Great Offices are at Boston, New York & Philadelphia.

C-8

C-11

between Philadelphia, New York, Boston and Piscataway (Portsmouth). The Philadelphia mail, which left on Fridays, arrived in New York Sunday nights. On the way mail bags were dropped at the New Jersey post offices in Burlington and Perth Amboy.

On Mondays letters were dispatched from New York northward. Saybrook (Seabrook), at the mouth of the Connecticut River, was an important exchange point, where the mail from Boston was met. Along the coast New London, Stommington (Stonington), Rhode Island (Newport) and Bristol were served, and the Boston post office took care of letters from and to Marblehead, Salem, Ipswich and Newbury, while Piscataway was the terminal of the line.

Moll's map was published in several editions. The latest must have been printed in 1729 (figure C-8). A facsimile of the "Account" appeared in the Independent Edition (1927) of The Pageant of America, page 219, which was dated 1715, and Delf Norona, who made an exhaustive study of these maps, in a private letter stated "there is a hint that there was an earlier edition of 1711". (c-8)

Since Moll, the cartographer, never visited America himself, but relied on others for the details of his maps and for information on which the "Account" was based, it seems to be a safe assumption that the postal services just described were operating even prior to the year the first edition of this map was published. It may also be justified to speculate that Moll's data reflected conditions of a still earlier decade because practically all post offices recorded by him were incorporated in the rate statements of Queen Anne's postal act of 1710/11, the provisions of which must have been under consideration for quite some time prior to their being submitted to the Parliament for approval.

The above indicates that at the turn of the century transportation of the mail by land was well established in New England. After New York's Governor, Francis Lovelace, had taken the initiative by sending a mail carrier to Hartford and Boston in January 1673 (see figures B-4 and B-4a) along jungle paths roads had been built which allowed post riders to conduct a more or less regular mail service between the two important communities of New York and Boston. The "Old Post Road", by way of the shore line, and its twin "Boston Post Road" became established facts. The Boston News Letter of December 13-20, 1714 announced:

> "The Western Post between Boston and New York will go once a fortnight between Boston and New York, alternating by way of Hartford and by way of Saybrooke."

The map of figure J-1 shows the location of these roads and a third one which became the postal pipelines between the two capitals.

The New Jerseys, East and West, have always been important postal links between north and south. It began with messages carried along

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(c-8) Unfortunately Mr. Delf Norona passed away in May, 1974 before he could report on the result of his research in a separate Chapter for this book as he had planned to do.

primitive paths, mostly by Indians, between Manhattan and the Delaware settlements during the Dutch and Swedish administrations there. The distance could be coverd in five or six days (c-9).

During the second half of the seventeenth century a surprisingly large number of new settlers arrived in the Jerseys resulting in an increased demand for road connections in north-southern as well as in east-western directions. The development of the Jersey roadssystem received a powerful impetus from the gradually growing New York-Philadelphia commercial transportation requirements, from traveling merchants and other persons, from moving merchandise and postal matter. In addition to the main thoroughfares numerous cross roads connected the settlements in the twin ppovinces. However, from a postal history point of view the latter were of minor importance.

Enclosed as New Jersey is by the Hudson and Delaware Rivers, with the Raritan and several smaller streams in between, the routes chosen by the early road builders were mainly contingent upon the ease by which men, their animals and their burdens could cross these waterways. Exact descriptions of the paths they followd are scarce. One of the most reliable found is the account given by a Dutch traveler whose goal it was to visit the area where two decades earlier the Swedes had settled on the banks of the South (Delaware) River. In November 1679 he and his party left Manhattan. Among those who accompanied Jaspar Dankers (c-10) was a man who knew the country and its inhabitants well, both the European colonists and the Indians.

The small group sailed from Manhattan across New York Bay heading for the north-east point of Staten Island. There they entered the Kill van Koll, passed Schutters (Shooters) Island and before nightfall landed on the Jersey coast near the mouth of the Elizabeth Kill. Since the water appeared to be very rough the next morning it was decided to send the horses to Woodbridge by land, while the rest of the party sailed southward to Smokers Hook, where a kill (creek) runs up to that settlement. They lost half a day waiting for the horses, but reached Pescatteway (Piscataway) the evening of the second day, where the night was spent in a tavern. The next morning "we ... set across (the Raritan River) in a canoe, and the horses would swim across." The most convenient crossing appeared to be near the place where New Brunswick was established a few years later (See map of Figure C-9).

Then the treck southward began to the "Falls of the South River" through country described as follows:

> "It is nothing but a foot-path for men and horses, between the trees and through the small shrubs, altough we came across places where there were large plains, beset with a few trees, and grown over with long grass, which was the worst ... When about half way, you come to a high, but very rocky hill, which is very difficult

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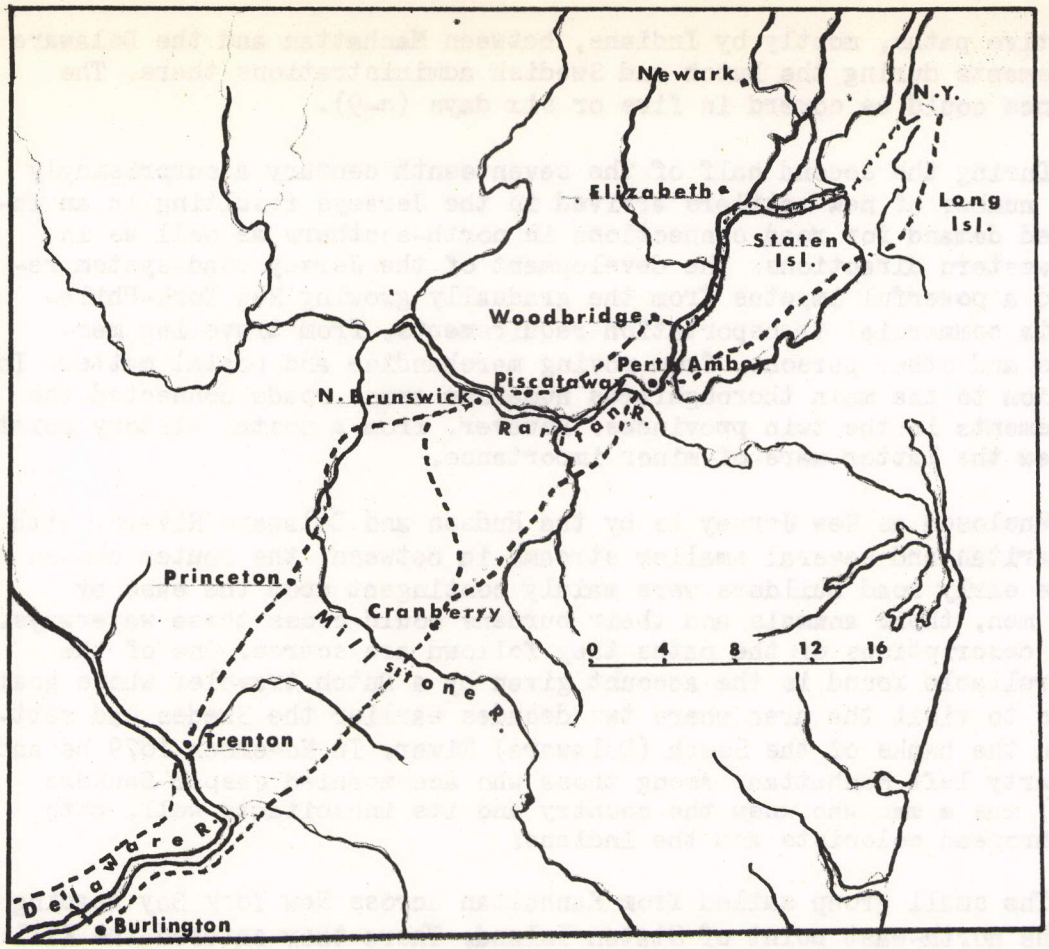
(c-9) Irving S. Kull: New Jersey, a History (New York, 1930), p. 302.
(c-10) Jasper Dankers and Peter Sluyter: Journal of a Voyage to New York and a Tour in several of the American Colonies in 1679-1680. (Brooklyn, 1867), pp. 167-77. (An English translation ofthe origial Dutch manuscript).



C-9. New Jersey's Colonial Post Roads.

> for man or beast to walk upon. After crossing it, you come to a large valley, the descent to which, from this hill, is very steep, by a very shrubby road; and you must dismount, in order to lead your horses down carefully, as well as to descent carefully yourselves ... We rode a little further, and came to Millstone River, which runs so crookedly, that you cross it at three different places. After we crossed it ... we arrived at the falls of the South River about sundown."

A few Quakers had settled at this place, which later received the name of Trenton. On the sixth day after having left Manhattan Dankers and his party descended the Delawzare to Burlington. They rested there on Sunday, November 19th and proceeded the next morning by canoe to Tinicum Island, which had been the Swedish seat of government. A few years later Philadelphia would have its beginnings nearby. Thus the distance between the two future commercial centers was covered in one week.

The route just described was probably the same one used by the Indian and Dutch postal carriers of the mid-century. It became known as the Upper Road or King's Highway. In August 1781 a French army under General Rochambeau marched along this highway. It had left its encampment near Dobbs Ferry on the Hudson in order to join General Washington's forces. (c-11) Well before the end of the 17th century a Lower Road branched off from the Upper, four or five miles west of the Raritan crossing, proceeding down through Cranberry and Burlington. After having crossed the Delaware River it joined the Upper Road to the south.

The East Jersey proprietaries in July 1683 petitioned to Deputy Governor Lawrie that "it might be discovered whether may not a convenient road be found betwixt Perth Town and Burlington, for the entertaining of a land conveyance that way." (c-12) As a result of this action a second road through East Jersey, connecting New York and Philadelphia, became of some importance for the transportation of the mail. It went by Long Island, Staten Island and Perth Amboy, and joined the existing Cranberry-Burlington route. However, the post riders had to negotiate five ferries this way. Primitive craft, bad weather conditions, and the idiosyncracies of the ferrymen often were important factors which seriously affected the speed by which the mail could be delivered.

Later, in order to avoid these inconveniencies, which imposed real hardships on the carriers, another route was given preference. It crossed the Hudson to Elizabeth port by sailboat and the Raritan near Brunswick. From there it followed the Upper Road to Trenton via Princeton.

History credits two Postmasters General, Spotswood and Franklin, with this improvement. When West Jersey's Governor Boone loudly protested the change, because the new route bypassed Burlington, his capital, and when Amboyans became upset by the fact that Woodbridge was given preference as the principal stopover on the most northern stretch, Franklin vigorously declined the honor of having been the initiator of the move, leaving the Governor's scorn and the spite of the disappointed East Jerseyites rest on Spotswood's head, who had long since died.

New Jersey became one of the colonies which saw an early appearance of the stage coach due to the fact that on the main north-south roads as well on a number of cross roads a considerable demand developed for the transportation of passengers and cargo. The newspapers of the early eighteenth century advertised a variety of such services, which often used the word "post" in their announcements. However, no letter-mail was carried by them, except clandestinely, or on such byways within the the colony where the official post was not operating.

In the thirties local postal traffic had grown to such an extent that the first post offices were opened. A Philadelphia newspaper of

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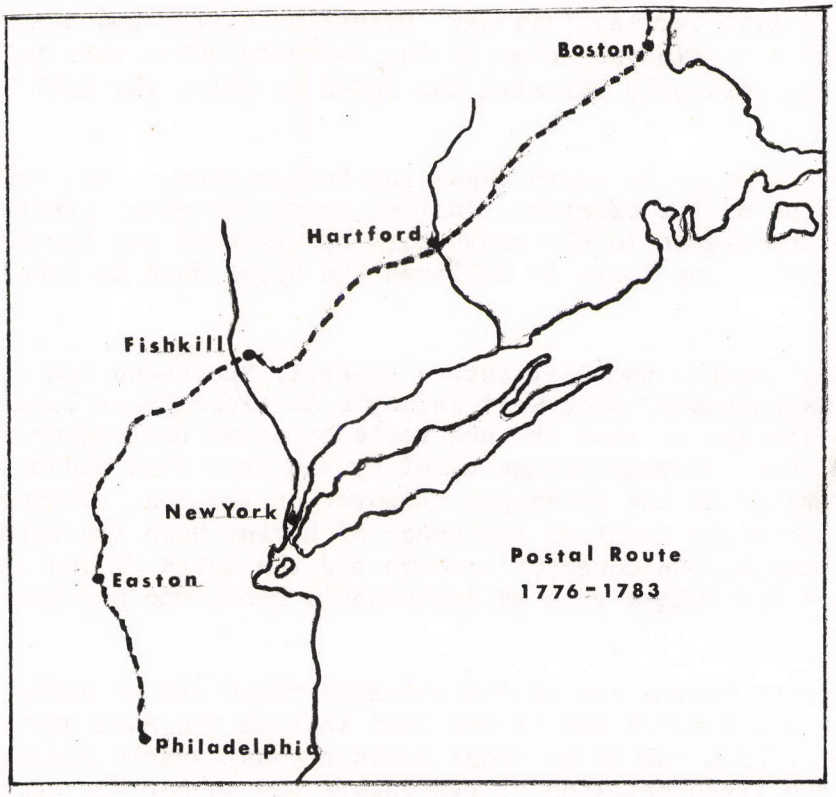
(c-11)New Jersey Road Maps of the 18th Century. (Princeton, 1970).
(c-12) William A. Whitehead: Early History of Perth Amboy (New York, 1856). p. 269.

December, 1733 advertised that "there are a number of letters in the Post Office at Perth Amboy for persons in the counties of Somerset, Monmouth and Essex", and the New York Gazette of September 23, 1734 announced: "... a Post Office is now settled in Perth Town" (c-13). The number of such offices grew steadily. When William Goddard organized his Constitutional Post there were six on his list: Newark, Elizabeth Town, Woodbridge, Brunswick, Princeton and Trenton.

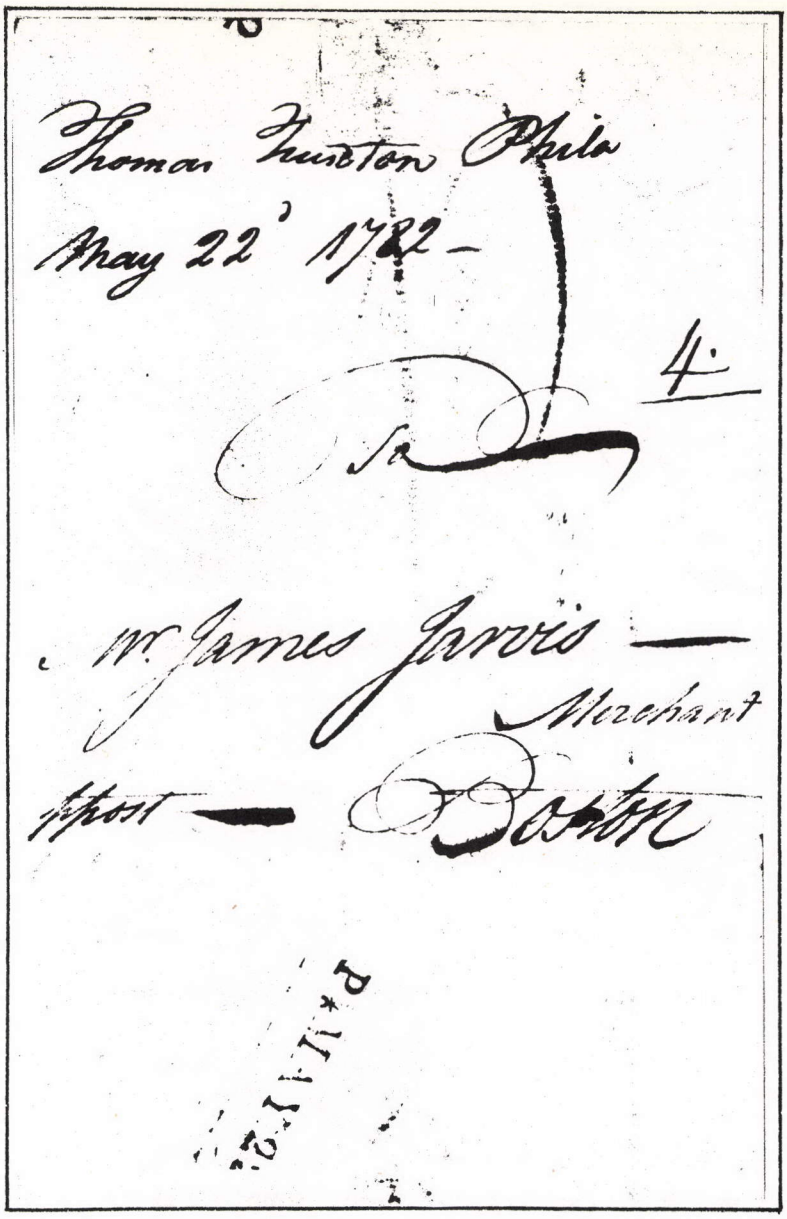
When the Revolution started the Jerseys soon became a battle ground of importance after New York city had fallen in the Hands of the British army. As a consequence the old postal link between north and south was badly interfered with. The mail had to be carried along a westernly route which connected Easton on the Delaware River with Fishkill on the Hudson (figure C-10).

Letters which have been routed via Easton and Fishkill during the war years are no rarities. Figure C-11 shows an example. Others can be



C-10

(c-13) Frank L. Morse: Report from New Jersey. S.P.A. Journal, January 1947, p. 308.



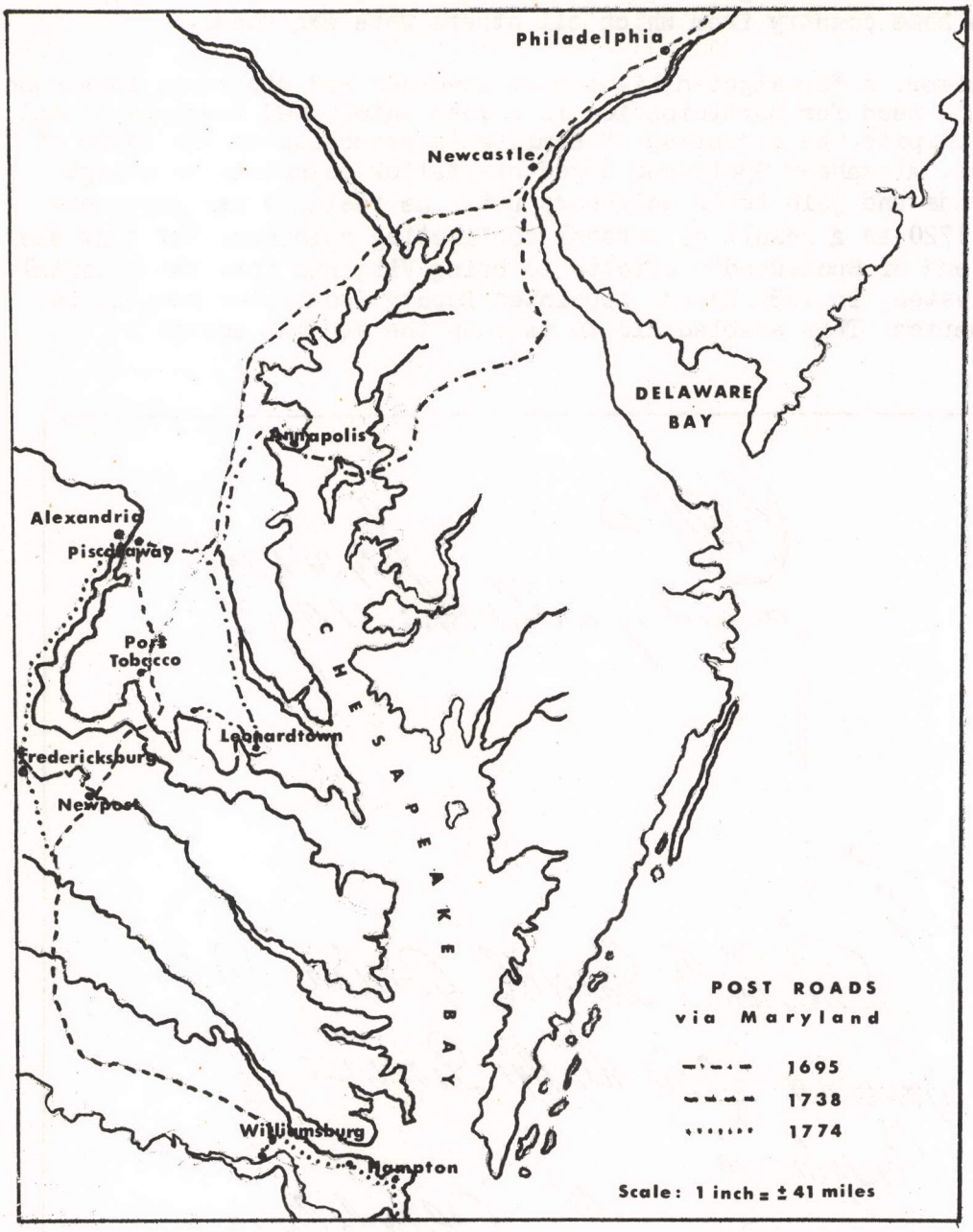
C-11. P*(HILADELPHIA), black, 4½ x 5. MAY 22, on reverse, 1782. To Boston. Rate 4 dwts. Via Easton. (Connecticut Historical Society. J.Jarvis Papers).

found in Part II of this book. During the days of intrigue and treason, when Benedict Arnold became a turncoat, the letter of figure C-12 was written in Morgantown on January 20, 1780. From General Washington's headquarters there it went by Fishkill to Albany. The addressee appeared to have left, thus the post office redirected the double-sheet letter to West Point, where it arrived May 29th. Inflation had boosted rates at that time almost to the top.

C-12. Morgantown, N.J. January 20, 1780, double letter to Albany via Fishkill. Rate 80 dwts, Redirected to West Point. Rate 53 dwts, 8 gr., total 133 dwts, 8 gr. Local currency 55 sh. 7 d. (The New York Historical Society).

From Philadelphia southward the Grand Line of Post followed the Delaware River, first via New Castle and to Maryland's eastern shore land on Chesapeake Bay, latwr after crossing the Elk River to Baltimore and Annapolis. These postal connections are amply described in the Chapter on Maryland Colonial Post. The map of figure C-13 outlines the postal roads from Philadelphia to Virginia through the "Old Line State".

The earliest history of Virginia's postal links with either the north or south leaves hardly any substance that has not been recorded

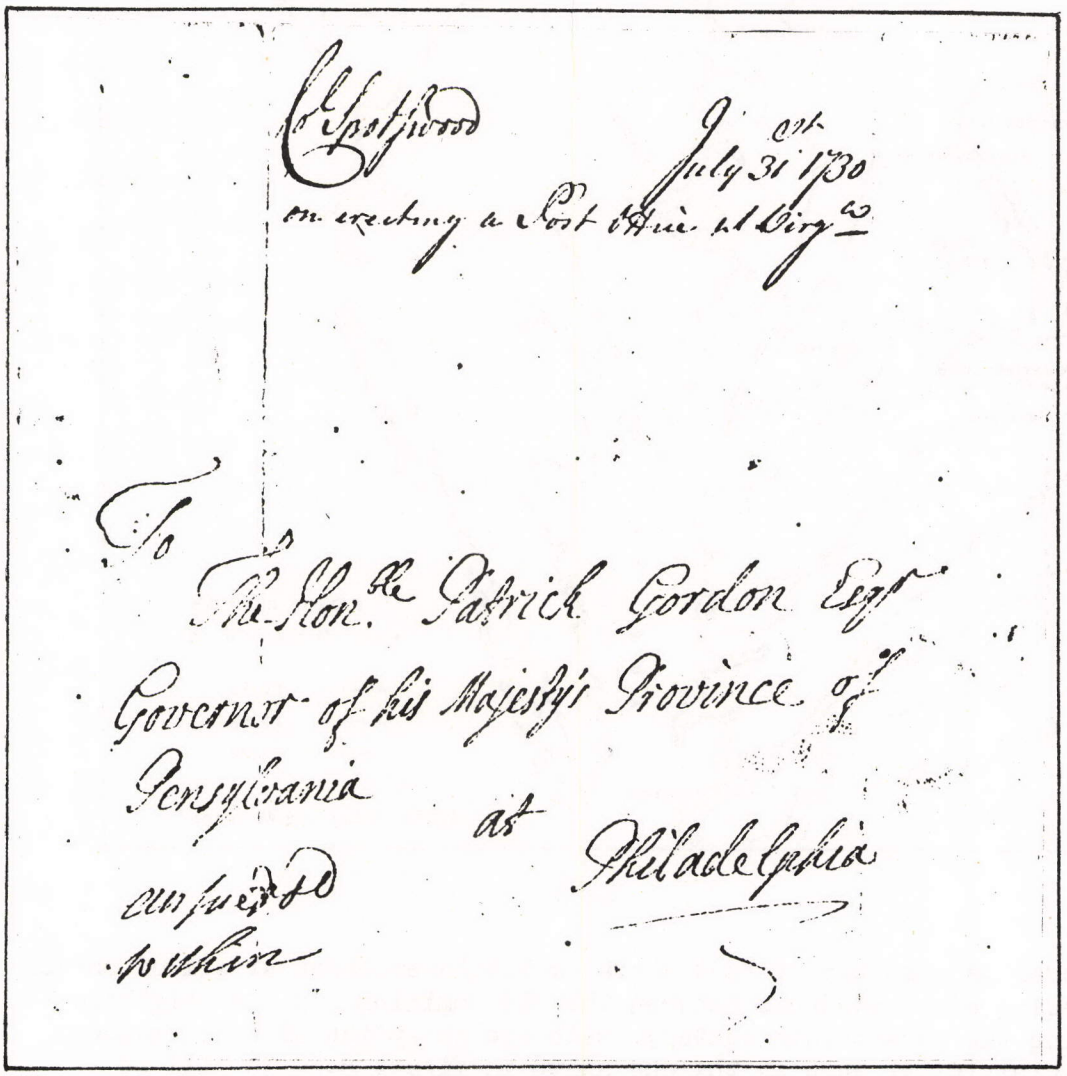


C-13

before. As a matter of fact there is little evidence at all of border crossing correspondence between the Old Dominion and its neighbors during the seventeenth century, with the exception of an occasional official letter such as the one shown in figure B-2. As will be described in Chapter K on Andrew Hamilton's efforts to organize a postal system for and between all American colonies, Virginia

stayed aloof from those plans. Viewed from a commercial standpoint it is understandable that Virginians did not care particularly for such contacts since the economy was largely based on the cultivation of tobacco and its marketing. This resulted in a business relationship with the home country from which all others were excluded..

However, a far-sighted Lieutenant Governor had different ideas about Virginia's need for participation in a more integrated American postal system. Despite the rejection of Hamilton's proposals by the House of Burgesses, Alexander Spotswood urged his fellow colonists to change their minds and join their neighbors until he resigned his governorship in 1720 as a result of several conflicting opinions. But that was not the end of Spotswood's efforts to bring Virginia into the colonial postal system. In 1730 he was appointed Deputy Postmaster General for North America. This enabled him to take up the subject again.



C-14. Germanna, Va. July 31, 1730, by private carrier to Philadelphia. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

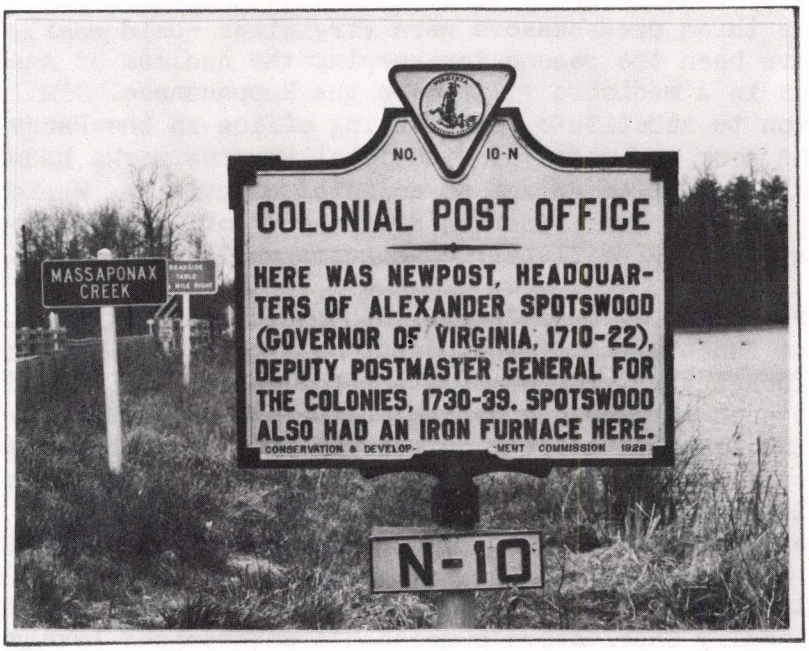
On July 31, 1730 he wrote the Governor of Pennsylvania, Patrick Gordon, of his intention "for settling a regular Post Correspondence which may reach so far southward as through the Colony of Virginia". The cover of this letter is depicted in figure C-14. The draft of the Governor's reply, which has been preserved, read as follows:

"Govr. to Mr. Spotswood on Post Office 1730

Answer

Sir I had yours by Mr. Russel and as a due encouragement for promoting His Majesty's revenue and the benefit of trade is not only very just and absolutely necessary as sure. Nothing shall be wanting on my part that may contribute to answer the good ends proposed in your establishing of regular stages for carrying on a frequent correspondence by the post office. I heartily wish you success and am Sir ..."

Spotswood's efforts were soon successful as Andrew Bradford, then postmaster in Philadelphia, is quoted in the Weekly Mercury of July 20, 1732 that postal communications now existed between Philadelphia and Williamsburg. Though the Act of Queen Anne stated that America's General Post Office was located in New York, Spotswood took the bold step to move it from Manhattan to Massaponax on Virginia's Rappahannock River, three or four miles below Fredericksburg. The ex-Governor operated a blast furnace there and a wharf from where he shipped his bar iron (c-14). The name of the place, unfamiliar to the nations' postmasters, was soon changed to New Post.



C-15. (Col. Dan. Warren).

(c-14) W.H. Gaines Jr.: Nerve Center of the Colonial Mails. Virginia Cavalcade, Winter, 1973. pp. 33-36.

The Pennsylvania Gazette of November 3, 1737 noted that at that time 24 days were alotted for the round trip from Philadelphia to Williamsburg with Henry Pratt as "riding postmaster" (c-15). A more extended service was announced in the Virginia Gazette of April 28, 1738 which gave a rider one week to make the round trip from New Post to Susquehanna via Annapolis, where he would exchange mails with the rider from Philadelphia. It took three days each way to carry the mail from New Post to and from Williamsburg.

William Parks, the publisher of the paper, who was also Williamsburg's postmaster, gave the following description of the service:

> "Riders are engaged so conveniently, that no Post Horse is to cross Patowmack or Susquehanna, by which means the Mail will pass much more certain than usual, it having been often retarded before, by bad weather when it was impossible for a horse to pass these wide Ferries, so that the Post will for the future, regularly arrive at Williamsburg every other Saturday."

Figure VA-31 in Part II portrays a letter which bears witness of the post's proper functioning between Williamsburg and Philadelphia. It left the Virginia capital on March 9th, 1745/46 and was charged 5 pennyweights. Due to the depreciation of local currency the addressee had to pay 2 shillings, 1 penny postage, or twice the sterling amount.

During the administrations of Deputy Postmasters General Head Lynch and Eliot Benger the General Post Office remained located at New Post, though its legitimate site was New York. With one powerful swing of his broom Benjamin Franklin swept this anomaly out of existence in 1753. The fact that his three predecessors were Virginians could easily be construed to have been the reason for keeping the nucleus of American postal activities in a mediocre village on the Rappahannoc. Similarly Franklin's decision to substitute his printing office in the Pennsylvania capital for the poor accomodations the Tubal Furnace works had to offer probably could be called an act of colonial chauvinism. Whatever his reasons for the move were, America's main post office from now on was located in a center of official, commercial and social importance.

The first pages of this Chapter mentioned conflicting statements regarding the functioning of the postal services from Williamsburg to the south. Though the trade centers in Charlestown and around Cape Fear beckoned for such services no reliable overland post was established until war time transportation requirements opened up the necessary road connections. As late as 1774 Hugh Finlay, who made a thorough survey of the colonial postal services, painted a very dark picture of the situation in the Carolinas. Shortly before the revolution started did any letter pass between Charlestown and Wilmington in North Carolina along the miserable coastal road. The bulk of the letter-mail was shipped by sea. Traditionally Charlestown's merchants entertained lively commercial relations with business houses in Philadelphia, New York and New

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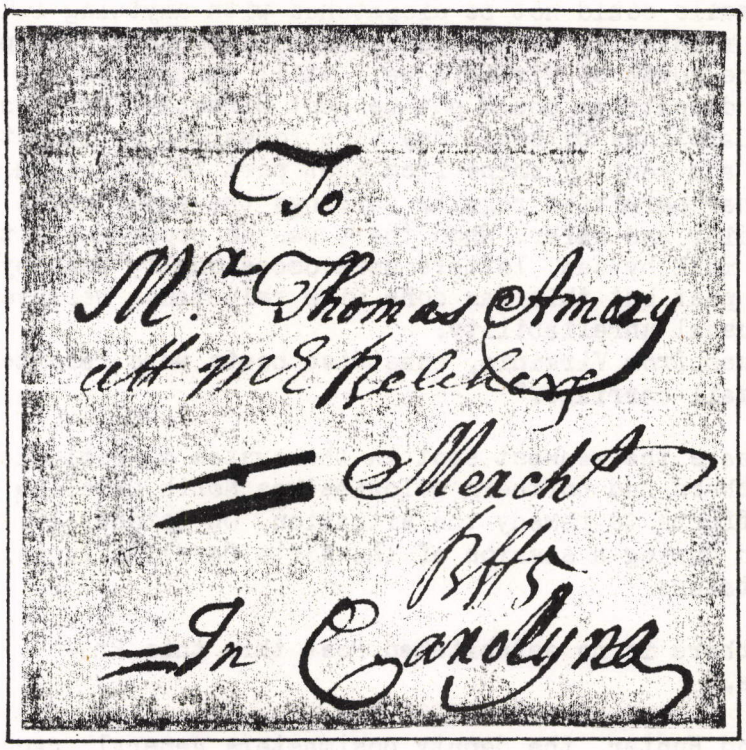
(c-15) Fairfax Harrison: The Colonial Post Office in Virginia. William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine, Second Series IV, 1924, p. 81.

England, but in those early days such correspondence was largely conducted via London. During the French and Indian war the military was highly interested in reliable and speedy north-south intelligence connections vice versa, and so were the army commanders, American and British, when the independence of the colonies was at stake. The subject forms an important part of the early and mid-eighteenth century history of the posts. (c-16)

One of the oldest letters in the north-south traffic which ever reached Charleston was found in the Thomas Amory files of the Library of Congress. Besides being an interesting postal document showing the round-about routes of some early eighteenth century's international mail, it proves that Boston's postmaster William Brooker was able to enlist the services of a reliable south-bound skipper for taking care of letters addressed to the Carolinas. Patrick Rush, a business man in the Portuguese island of Madeira, on February 20, 1720, penned the



C-16. Madeira, February 27, 1720, shipletter via Boston to (Charlestown) Carolyna, June 9. Shipletter rate 1 d. plus 4 d. rate for shipment from American port to port. (Library of Congress).

(c-16) Regretfully a planned Chapter on the French and Indian war had to be omitted from the Project when Mrs. Edith Faulstich, due to her illness and subsequent demise, was prevented from fulfilling her gladly accepted assignment.

the letter, the cover of which is depicted in figure C-16. It was addressed to Mr. Amory "in Carolyna". Today's postal historian who reads the simple address is rightfully amazed and impressed by Mr. Rush's strong faith in the reliability of the ship's captain to whom he entrusted his message and by the man's confidence that the American postal system would find a way to deliver it to the addressee in faraway South Caroline. This faith is the more remarkable because he must have known that the carrying ship was not bound for Charlestown but for the port of Boston. An endorsement by Armory on the reverse of the cover shows that the letter was received in Charlestown on June 9th, just over 100 days after it had left Funchal in Madeira.

For many years the most reliable route of communication to the far south from northern ports was through coastwise convoys. Ruth Lapham Butler (c-17) described the situation in the following words:

> "South of Virginia letters had to travel chiefly by sea, and though during the summer, coastwise traffic was frequent enough to insure reasonable convenience and speed, the mails could not be dispatched with anything like the same regularity as was possible in the north. The posts to the south of Virginia were still unimproved. At times when dispatches could not be sent directly from Boston to the Carolinas by sea, they were forwarded by land to New York and sent by ships from that port to the south. When weather permitted regular sailings the water route was speedier and safer. When there was no opportunity to send mail by sea, letters were occasionally sent by the land post but this was done with reluctance because of its usual unreliability.
>
> Even from Virginia, coastwise boats were resorted to for mail carriage."

For many years the weakest spot in the system of communications between the southern and northern colonies was North Carolina, inspite of many local efforts to remedy the situation. On October 14, 1755 a message was read during a session of the North Carolina legislature which clearly stated:

> "... there is no established Post thru this Province."

Franklin and Hunter, the deputy postmasters general, recognized this deplorable state of affairs, but with general conditions as they were in a country at war, they had their hands full in providing proper postal services to the northern colonies. The south remained badly neglected.

Governors Dobbs and Tryon tried to establish some form of communication with the north by informal arrangements. In 1755 an agreement was reached with James Davis, the public printer of the province, who

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(c-17) Ruth Lapham Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), pp. 51-52.

undertook to organize a fortnightly messenger service between Wilmington and Suffolk in Virginia. Though continued through 1759 this solution was entirely inadequate. A few years later a group of business men, with active support of Governor Tryon, developed some sort of private postal system by hiring express riders who carried letters to Charlestown. Elsewhere in the province similar arrangements were made to the disapproval of the deputy postmaster general, who complained that those activities were in competition with the royal post. But how could there be competition when there existed no post office in North Carolina, the Governor replied:

> "I hope I have not subjected myself to the penalty of any act of the British legislature or that my conduct will appear at home to have in any ways tended to impede his Majesty's intentions of establishing a General Post thro' this continent untill you had opened the General Post office, and it could not be considered as open, before letters were conveyed by it." (c-18)

Early in 1765 it was decided to divide America's postal territory into two districts, a northern district extending from Quebec to Virginia, and one including the Carolinas, Georgia, the Floridas and the Bahama Islands. One major reason for the split, maybe even the only reason for it, must have been the apparent impossibility of establishing a mail route by land between Virginia and South Carolina. North Carolina, though a part of the southern district, long remained a kind of postal no-man's land.

In the mean time letters from Charlestown and Wilmington addressed to New York and New England went by ship to a northern port and from there by landmail to their destinations. A Charlestown correspondent entrusted his message of April 15, 1765 to the adminstrator of the Charlestown Packett. According to the Bishop mark on the cover's reverse (figure C-17) it arrived in New York as a ship letter on May 13th, from where it was forwarded to Philadelphia.

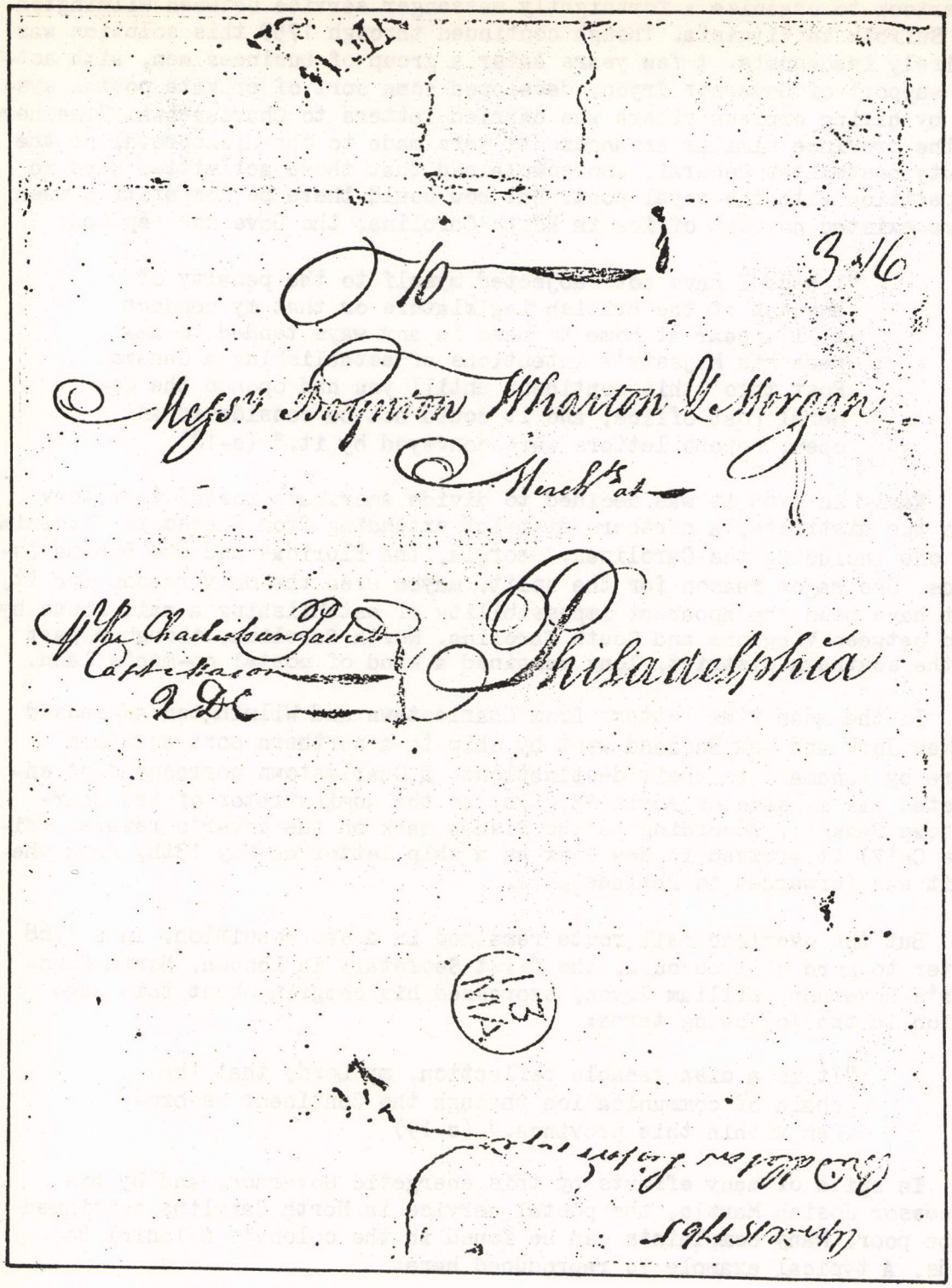
But the overland mail route remained in a sad condition. In a 1768 letter to Lord Hillsborough, the first Secretary in London, North Carolina's Governor, William Tryon, expressed his chagrin about this condition in the following terms:

> "It is a disagreeable reflection, my Lord, that the chain of communication through the Continent be broken within this province." (c-19)

In spite of many efforts by this energetic Governor, and by his successor Josiah Martin, the postal service in North Carolina continued to be poor. Many complaints can be found in the colony's Colonial Records. A typical example is reproduced here:

> "Lord Granville's Commission to the Governor (Martin) is come in. Two copies by way of Charlestown & New York, both open'd and read by every storekeeper on the way."

(c-18) North Carolina Colonial Records, Vol. VII, p. 204.
(c-19) ibid., Vol. VII, p. 66. and next quotation: Vol IX, p. 1097.

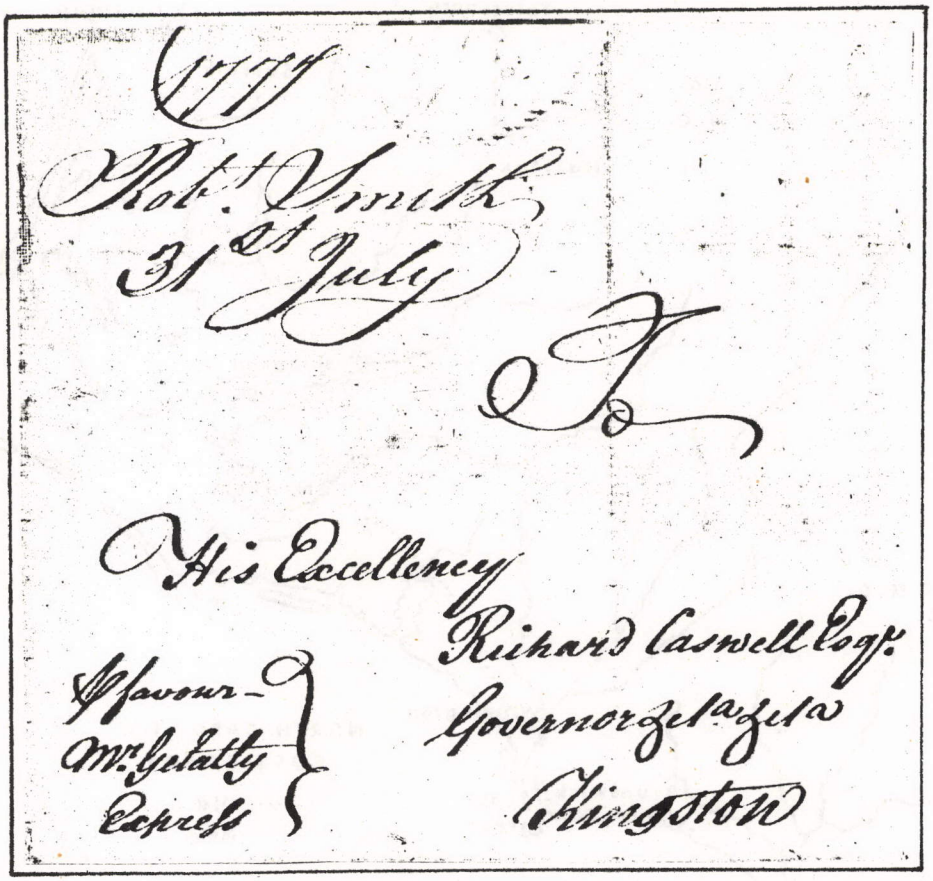


C-17. Charlestown, S.C. April 15, 1765, per Charlestown Packet to Philadelphia via NEW/YORK, brown, 24 x 12. Bishop mark 13/MA(Y) on reverse. Ship letter rate 16 gr. New York-Philadelphia rate 3 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

Even in 1774, after so many years of complaints and suggestions for improvement, the system, though existing on paper, did not func-

tion properly. William Hooper, Wilmington's postmaster, tested its efficiency by sending a number of letters to Boston by the land route, but none of them reached their destination. A local merchant ran an experiment by sending a letter and its duplicate to Philadelphia by the post and a second copy by a coastal vessel. Only the last one reached its destination.

In local intercourse express riders had to be hired in too many cases (figure C-18). They were very expensive.

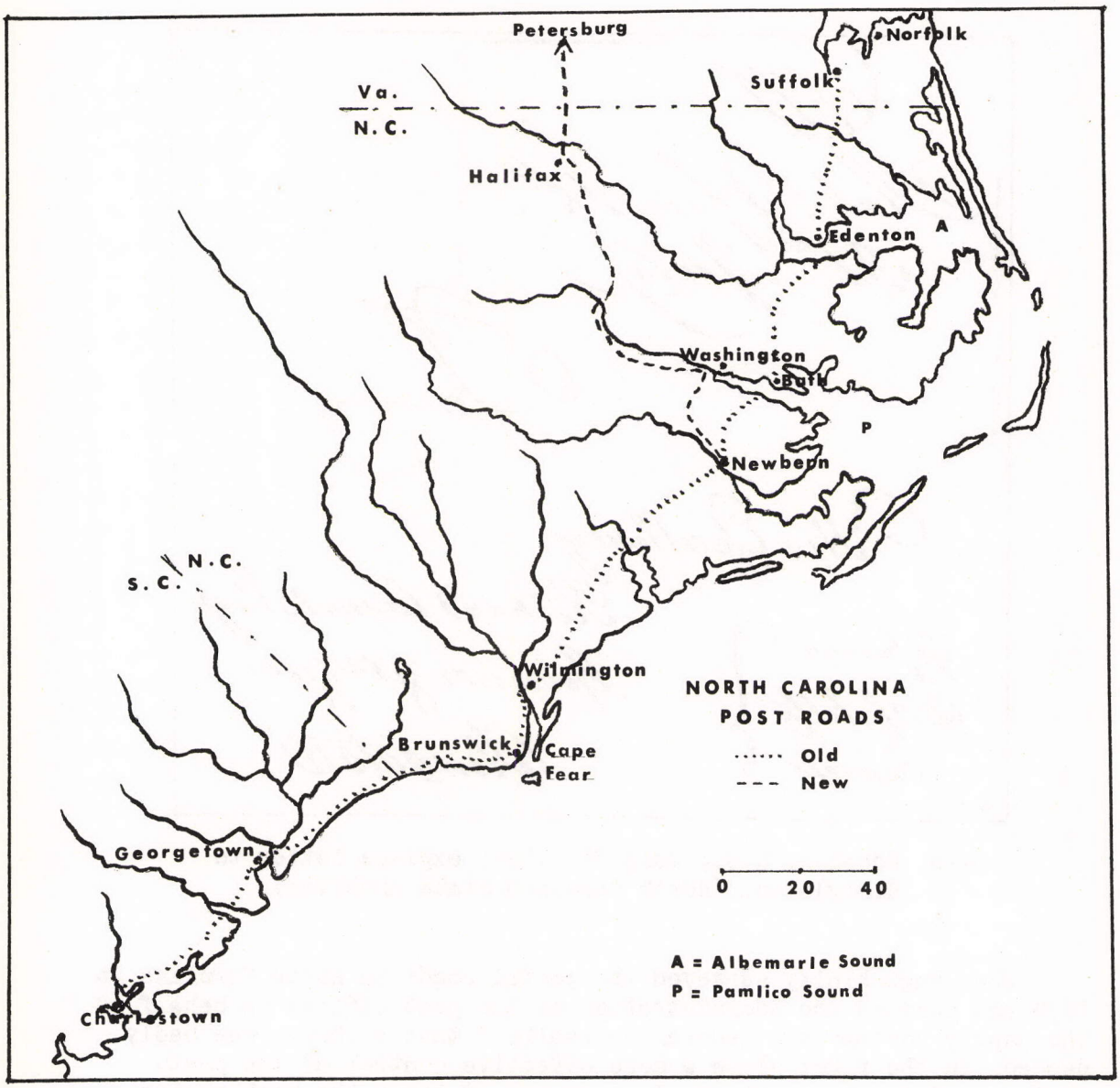


C-18. Edenton, N.C., July 31, 1774, express letter to Kin(g)ston. (North Carolina State Archives).

When Hugh Finlay surveyed the postal roads in North Carolina in 1774 and checked the administration of the post offices on behalf of the deputy postmasters general he realized that a change was badly needed. In the first place a more effective control of the postmasters had to be organized. In a number of towns the bookkeeping had been neglected, the payments to the general office were in arrears, little attention had been paid to the provisions of the law, and some postmasters were absent from their office too often and for too long periods.

Finlay also explored the possibilities of more suitable routes

through North Carolina. There were too many ferry crossings over large bodies of water between Wilmington and Suffolk, the southern terminal of the northern department's system, which caused many delays and at times the loss of mail. If these could be avoided the postal service would be considerably improved. He visited Halifax on the road to Petersburg in Virginia (see the map of figure C-19), discussed the matter with local authorities and influential citizens. Naturally a postroad via Halifax would bypass the important communities of Washington and Edenton. The pros and cons would have to be weighed very carefully.



C-19

But Finlay never had a chance to witness the outcome of his plans

and recommendations, until in 1781 the road Wilmington to the north via Halifax was used by Lord Cornwallis' retreating army. The old road with its many bay-crossings would have held him up too long. In that respect military and postal requirements did not differ.

For a proper understanding of the problem-ridden north-south postal route it should be pointed out that its failure was not exclusively caused by conditions to the north of Wilmington which were mostly due to the hard to cross Pamlico and Albemarle estuaries, but that its neighbor in the south was equally resposible for the poor situation. The coastal road between Charlestown and Wilmington, often called the King's Highway, was almost impracticable during a major part of the year. It led through a sparsely inhabited area, where a traveler had to wade through deep sands and stinking swamps. In his diary Hugh Finlay, the postal surveyor, wrote in 1774:

> "On the whole, the road from Charlestown to Wilmington is certainly the most tedious and disagreeable on the continent of N. America. It is through a poor, sandy, barren, gloomy country without accomodation for Travellers. Death is painted in the countenances of those you meet, that indeed happens but seldom on the road. Neither Man nor beast can stand a long Journey thru' so bad a country where ther's much fatigue, and no refreshment: What must it be in their violent heats, when I found it so bad in the month of January ! (c-20)
>
> When the Post comes to be well regulated, there must be at least four changes of horses to carry on things with the necessary dispatch on this road." (c-21)

Further evidence of the poor north-south vice versa postal connections in this part of the country during those history making days can be found in the posting of a letter written by the South Carolina Committee of Correspondence on July 8, 1774 to its namesake in Williamsburg. It went by a private ship to Philadelphia and was put into the regular mail bag from there to the Virginia capital. Since the letter contained an important message, namely South Carolina's willingness to send delegates to the first Continental Congress, the Committee did not entrust it to the post office in Charlestown, but instructed the captain of a commercial vessel to deliver it to the postmaster in Philadelphia. One month after having been written the Virginians received word from their brethern in South Carolina regarding this consequential matter. The cover of the letter is depicted in figure R-6.

The most southern section of the Grand Line of Post unquestionally was the least attended to in the intercolonial system. Mail connections between Charlestown, Beaufort, Savannah and St. Augustine were infrequent and unreliable. Naturally prior to 1763 the last named had no place in the parliamentary postal network when the Servicio de Correos of Spain was responsible for handling the mail to and from the old port-city.

(c-20) The reader should realize that Mr. Finlay describes here conditions prevailing in a part of the Carolina coast where nowadays famous resorts are located.

(c-21) For earliest postal traffic along this road see Chapter N.

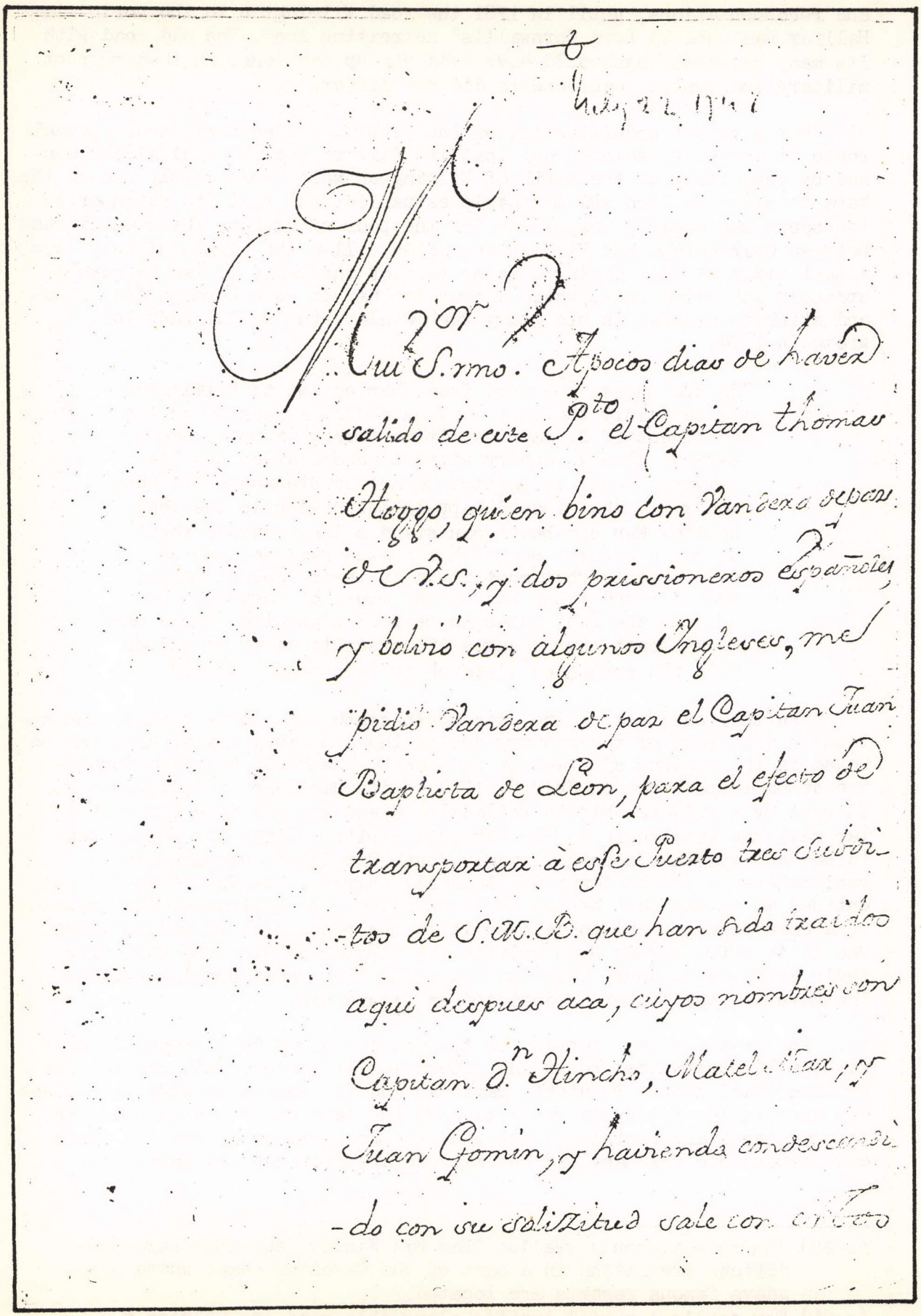


Figure C-20

prisioneros, y espero merezer à V.S.
la remision de los Vasallos de mi
Soberano q. se hallaren en esa Pro-
-vincia, dispensandole à demas su
favor al referido Capitan Leon, y
à mi ocasiones del agrado de V.S.
cuya vida ruego à Dios g.e m.s feliz.s
años. S.n Agustin de la Florida
22 de Julio de 1748.

B.l m.s de V.S. su mas
Seg.o Serv.r

D.n Man.l de Montiano

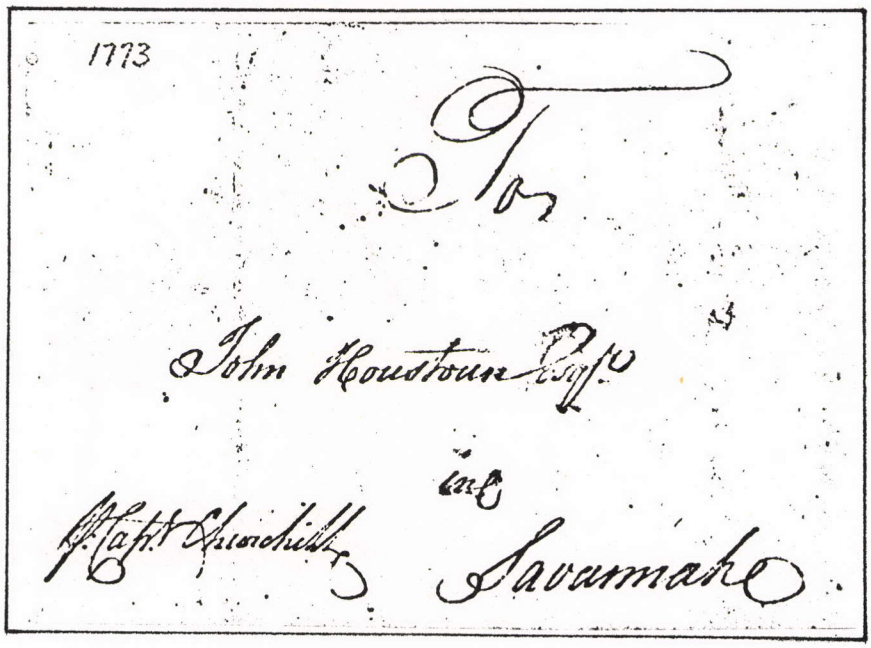
S.r D.n Antonio Palmer.

Figure C-20a

Letters exchanged between Spanish Florida and colonial America are hard to find. Figure C-20 shows the contents of one of these. It is dated "Sn. Agustin de la Florida, 22 de Julio de 1748" and addressed to the President of Pennsylvania's Provincial Council in the absence of a Governor (c-22). It deals with the exchange of prisoners of war who were being shipped under the protection of a white flag. The War of the Austrian Succession was coming to an end. The humanitarian act of mutually releasing men from captivity came as a logical gesture when peace was in sight.

The absence of this letter's address side is not accidental. Mid-century correspondence proves that the use of envelopes had become customary in Spain and its colonies, whereas West European countries postponed it until the nineteenth century (c-23). This was due to the fact that a separate cover was considered an extra sheet of paper when a letter's rate of postage was established.

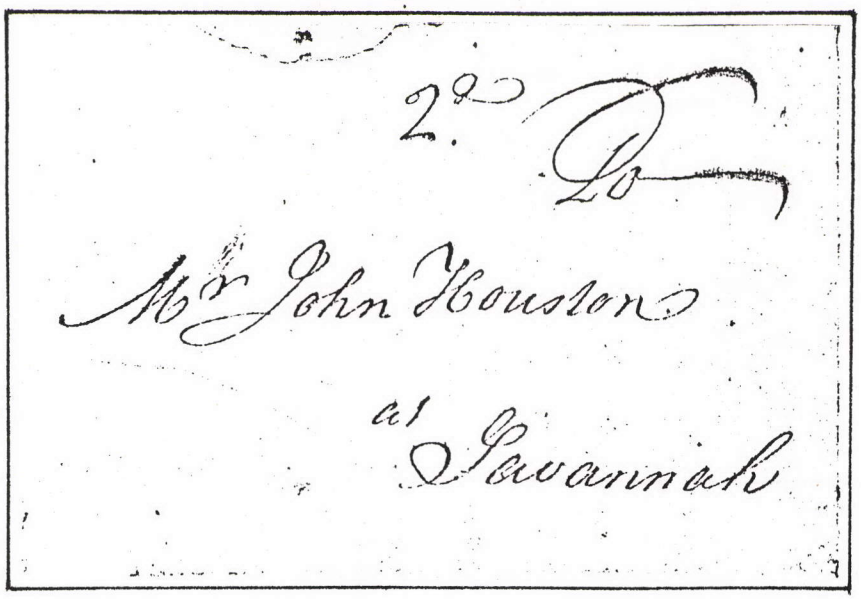
When the two Floridas, East and West, came under the protection of the Union Jack their postal service came under the administration of the southern district which had its headquarters in Charlestown. Chapter Q gives the reader a picture of postal conditions in Florida during the twenty years of British suzerainty.



C-20. Charlestown, S.C., November 13, 1773 to Savannah by private ship, outside the Post. (R.H.Lounsbery).

(c-22) Courtesy Pennsylvania State Archives.
(c-23) See figure 9 in "Texas, the Drama of its Postal Past" by this author.

Savannah, the port city of Georgia, for many colonial decades figured as the prospective southern terminal of the Grand Line of Post in the minds of early postal planners. It was the outlet for the products of the Georgian hinterland, and entertained important commercial contacts with the West Indies and with the mother country. However, for many years this postal dream remained little more than that, and whatever correspondence developed with the other American colonies was largely sent by ship, oten without passing through the hands of any postmaster. Such a letter is shown in figure C-20. Its counterpart, which was processed by the postoffice in Charlestown and went by the land route is depicted on this page (figure C-21).

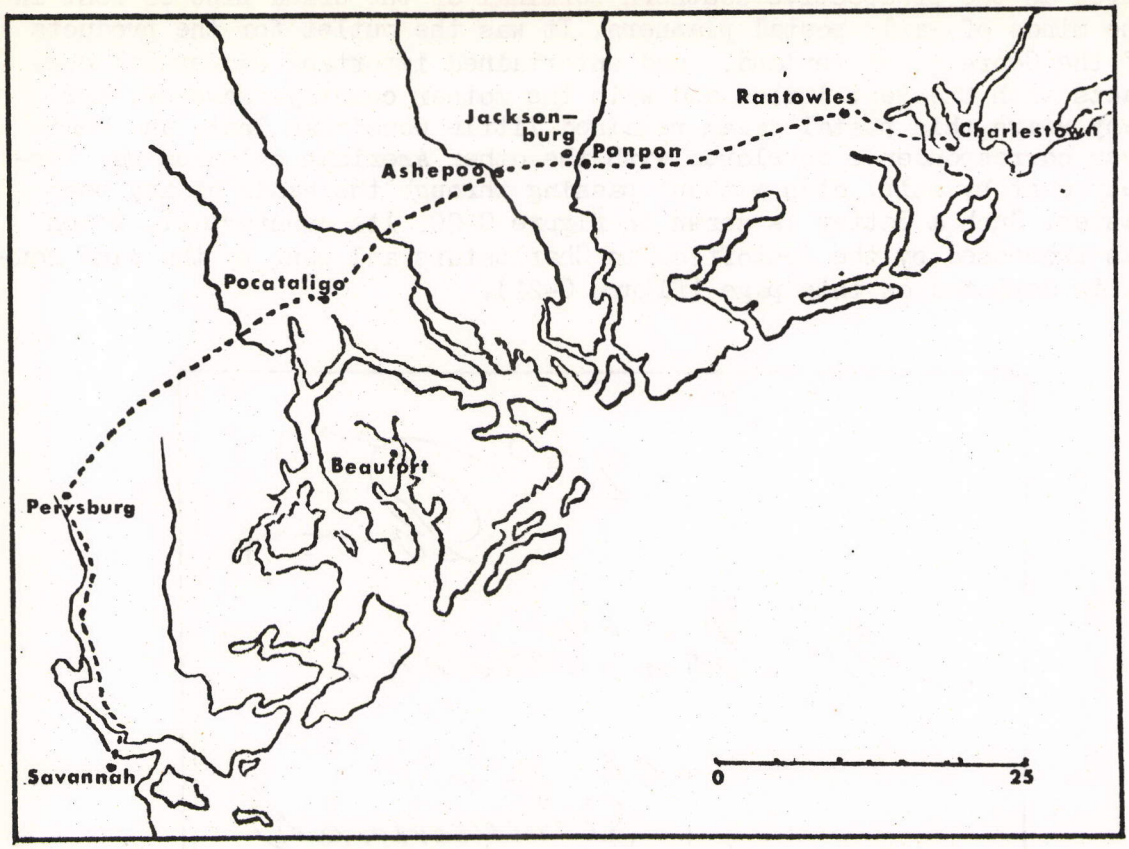


C-21. London, August 17, 1774, forwarded from Charlestown to Savannah. Rated 2 dwts. (University of Georgia Library).

The best information regarding the overland postal service between Charlestown and Savannah is contained in Finlay's report of his 1774 inspection tour. The only official operation during the pre-revolutionary years took place along the postal road between those two towns, though there are indications that a temporary provincial service existed which connected Augusta with the main line of post.

Thomas Lamar in 1776 petitioned to the General Assembly of South Carolina in the following words:

> "That the Petitioner has undertaken to act in the capacity of Post Rider from the Upper Parts of Savannah River near Augusta to Charles-Town since the 28th of June last. That he has been down seven Times since and always brought



C-22. Hugh Finlay's route between Charlestown and Savannah in early 1774.

> Dispatches from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and other Gentlemen to the President on Publick Service.-
> That the Petitioner has waited in Charles-Town for His Excellency's Answers by which means he has has been detained for some Days at a great Expence and has never received for some Days any Consideration for such Services.
> That the Petitioner is willing to engage for a moderate Compensation to continue to ride twice in every month and to carry all Dispatches on the service of the State. The Petitioner prays for an allowance for his past services or a fixed sum by the year as to the Horourable House shall seem meet &c." (c-24).

Finlay needed three days to cover the distances between Charlestown and Savannah, the only towns which had a post office at that time.

(c-24) Journal of the General Assembly of South Carolina, September-October, 1776. A.S. Salley (ed.) Columbia, 1909. P. 139.

However, the South Carolina Gazette of March 1, 1743 made an announcement which would indicate that some postal intercourse was carried on between the South Carolina capital and villages located between the two terminals.

> "This is to give Notice, that the Post from Ponpon to Charlestown will be carried on another Year. Those who desire to have their Gazette weekly carried up by the Post Boy, are desired to send in their Names to the following Places, viz.
> Those at Ashepoo, to Mr. Richard Webb
> Those at Ponpon Bridge, to Mr. John Page
> Those at Parker's Ferry, to Mr. James Robertson
> Those at Stono, to Mr. William Butler
> Those at Ashley Ferry, to Capt. Joseph Batsford.

For the monthly transportation of the overland mail between Charletown, Savannah and St. Augustine in East Florida the services of a Mr. Mackenfuss (c-25) had been obtained, who was paid £16 per journey, vice versa. When Finlay inquired about this rider's achievements doubt arose in his mind whether the arrangements made with him were adequate. He insisted that the mail men and their assistants "take the oaths & to give bond, and to furnish them with printed abstracts from the Acts touching their duty."

In Savannah Finlay found a well-kept post office, where Mr. Thompson was in charge. However, when it came to settling the office's accounts it appeared impossible to arrive at a satisfactory figure reflecting its operational results. Mr. Thompson's predecessor, a Dr. Fraser, had left his job without turning over his books. After paying a visit the man Finlay reported his findings in the following words:

> "He says he cannot settle with me because his children & negroes in his absence from home got into his office & destroyed his papers, but as soon as Mr. Roupell (the deputy postmaster general for the southern district) will send him an account of the debt, he will pay it. He believes it is about £27 sterling. This he said before me & in presence of Mr. Thompson."

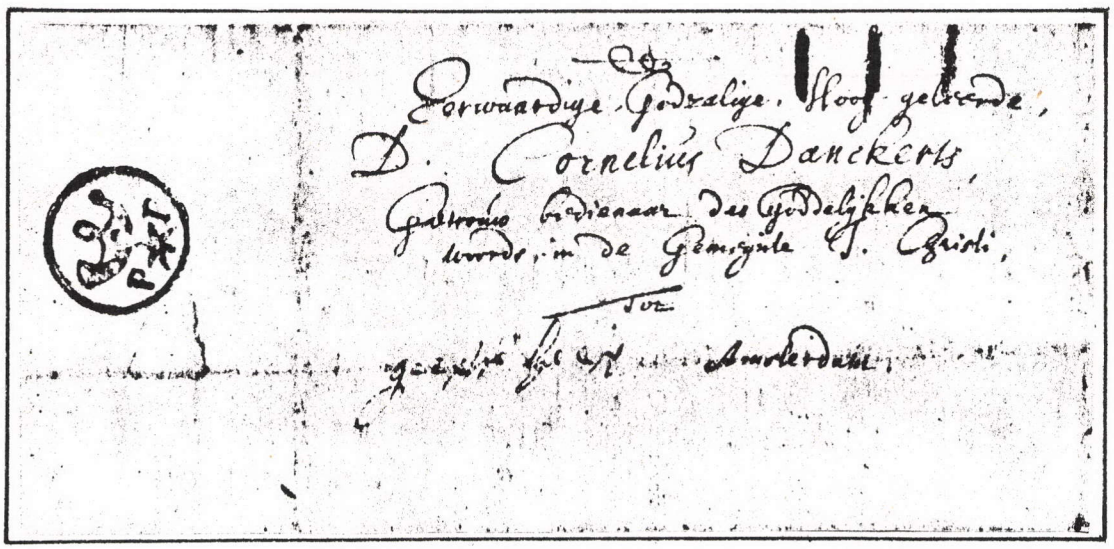
The general impression Finlay received from his visit to the southern end of the Grand Line of Post was that there was a need for a weekly mail from and to Savannah and that both Purysburg in Georgia and Sunbury, halfway on the road to St. Augustine, were serious candidates for having a post office.

(c-25) Or MacInfus. Finlay's spelling of names is not always reliable.

D. Postage Rates in Colonial and Revolutionary America

Alex.L.ter Braake

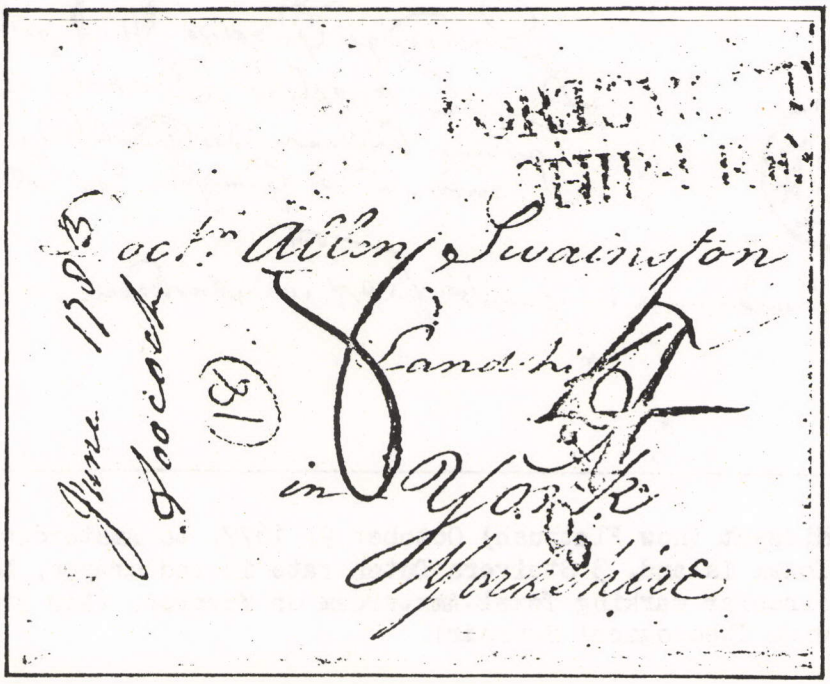
Probably the first American who paid postage on a letter he received was a Dutchman. In 1653 the Dutch West India Company had decreed that a ship's purser, who brought in the mail, was entitled to receive a fee of three stuivers from the addressee as a compensation for handling, sorting and numering the letters entrusted to him, and for the chore of entering them in a log book (see Chapter on Trans-Atlantic Mail). Since a Dutch stuiver used to be the equivalent of a British penny, and one penny in later years normally had a value of two American cents, the postal charge a Nieuw Amsterdam settler had to pay for a written message coming from abroad amounted to approcximately 6 cents. His reply to the home country would go out upon payment of one penny to the ship's master unless he found a passenger willing to oblige without a fee. Upon arrival in Holland, however, such letters became subject to Dutch postal regulations and an addressee had to pay the inland charges (figure D-1).



D-1. Midwout (now Flatbush) October 9, 1677, to Amsterdam, via Texel Island. 3 Stuivers Dutch rate in red crayon. Dutch circular marking Texel-Amsterdam on reverse. (New Brunswick Theological Seminar).

More than a century later an American sender of a trans-atlantic letter had to pay one shilling if it was sent per packet ship (figure D-2). By visiting the taverns near the docks it was still relatively easy for him to

D-2. N(ew)-York, 24 x 4½, black, July 7, 1785, per packet to Barcaldine, Scotland. Packet rate 1 sh. In all 2 sh. (Faulstich-Siegel Auction).



D-3. Charlestown, S.C. June 17, 1783, to York, Engl. via Portsmouth, July 30. Ship letter. (South Caroliniana Library, Columbia).

find a captain of a private ship, his mate or a passenger, willing to carry the epistle across the ocean for the prevailing fee (figure D-3.

The above describes in a few words how trans-atlantic letters were rated during the pre-statehood years. Simple as the regulations were for this category of correspondence a few more details will be given in this narrative. They lacked the rather complex character of those pertaining to the inland postage rates on this side of the ocean.

Actually little has transpired about the postal rates during the years of the seventeenth century. There was no general system which embraced the posts of all the colonies. Strongly individualistic as they were each was absorbed in its own activities and problems, of which the processing of written messages as a public service was still an almost unknown one. Consequently there was no need for establishing a rate schedule for such services (d-1).

Inter-colonial intercourse, and even later contacts within the individual colonies were almost exclusively of an official nature. The earliest American legislation on postal matters paid no attention to private letters. For example the laws of Virginia of 1658 and 1662 dealt with "publique letters". These messages were entrusted to constables or to plantation personnel, or to hired express riders, who received a remuneration commensurate with the time he was on the road. Nowhere in the scanty regulations are postal charges mentioned for official correspondence. There is no reason to assume that any such charges were made or collected.

Spradically the literature on the subject mentions a local public service, which advertised its rates. In 1683 a man by the name of Henry Waddy, or Waldy, who was a landowner on Francford Creek in the township of Taoconinck, or tekonay, to the east of Philadelphia, received a licence from William Penn for establishing a post office with authority to carry letters. He operated between Philadelphia, Chester, New Castle, Maryland (Annapolis?) and northward to the Falls of the Delaware (opposite Trenton). His charges were:

Philadelphia to	the Falls	3d.	distance 27 miles;
	Chester	2d.	15
	New Castle	4d.	34
	Maryland	6d.	?

It is almost certain that for the first time in the history of the American postal service the distance a letter travelled became the basis for establishing its postage. This would remain the deciding factor for well over a century there after, together with the letter's weight, which was determined by the number of sheets it consisted of. A single letter of one sheet of paper was charged with the standard rate. The message was written on one side, the name and address of the recipient on the other after folding and sealing the sheet. Additional sheets caused the rate to be increased proportionally. A one-ounce letter was charged 4 times the single rate.

(d-1) Theoretically the rates were supposed to be the same as those fixed for England by the postal law of 1660, which confirmed measures instituted by Oliver Cormwell's administration in 1656. The rates were 2 pence for distances of 80 miles or less, and 3d. for over 80 miles.

In addition to this early public postal service in Pennsylvania similar plans developed in New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts, according to the scant literature on the subject. Very little has become known about success or failure, nor have postage rates been recorded.

With granting of a patent to Thomas Neale, and with the postmastership of Andrew Hamilton in 1692 the entire situation in America underwent a change. An inter-colonial postal service, the trans-atlantic mail, as well as a further development of the few existing rudimental systems within the colonies were specific targets of the patent holder and his representative (See Chapter on Andrew Hamilton). The provincial governments, from Rhode Island in the north down to Pennsylvania and Maryland, began to realize that it was to their advantage to give serious consideration to the plans developed by Neale and Hamilton, and that the establishment of a uniform schedule of postage rates was a necessity. Only the Old Dominion of Virginia stayed aloof from the plan. The several acts "for encourageing the erecting of a Post Office" passed by the provincial legislatures give proof of their desire to meet a growing public need.

For example Pennsylvania's lawmakers in 1693 decided that "it be enacted" as follows:

> "... that a general post office be erected by Andrew Hamilton at Philadelphia, from whence all letters & packets may be with all Expedition sent into any of the parts of New England & other adjacent Colonies in these parts of America ... according to the several Rates hereafter mentioned ...
>
> To or from New York to Philadelphia, four pence half panny,
> To or from Philadelphia to Connecticute, nine pence,
> To or from Philadelphia to Rhode Islande, twelve pence,
> To or from Philadelphia to Boston, fifteen pence,
> To or from Phialdelphia to the Eastern parts of New England beyond Boston, nineteen pence,
> To & from Philadelphia to Lewis, Maryland & Virginia, nine pence,
> To and from every place within Eighty miles of Philadelphia four pence half penny,
> All Letters belonging to the Publick to be Received & Dispatched free of all Charges; ..."

A similar act passed by the New York Congress on November 11, 1692 contained a considerably less complete schedule of postal rates. It said:

> ".. for the post of every Single Letter from Boston to New York or from Maryland to New York nine pence currant mony aforesaid, and Soe in proportion as aforesaid, and for the post of every Single Letter from Virginia to New York twelve pence currant mony aforesaid, and for the post of every Single Letter to or from any place not exceeding eighty miles distance from New York four pence halfe penny currant mony aforesaid and Soe in proportion aforesaid, ..."

New York charged "... every Single Letter to or from Europe the West

Indies or else where to and beyond the Sea's, nine pence Currant mony", but Pennsylvania's legislature decided that for "all foreign Letters from Europe, the West Indies or any part beyond the seas" two pence were due in case of single letters and four pence for packets.

Though the financial results of the postal service under these regulations and Hamilton's spirited guidance showed considerable improvement the receipts did not cover the operating cost. Consequently during his visit to London in 1699 for consultations with the Postmasters General Hamilton voiced the opinion that rates had to be increased in order to turn the operation into a profitable one. Neale wholeheartedly supported his American representative's request for a revision of the rate structure.

The following tabulation compares the then prevailing rates and the ones he proposed.

Vice-Versa	effective	proposed
Not over 80 miles	4½ d	6 d
Between 80 and 150 miles	-	9
Boston to New York (300 miles)	12	12
Boston to Jersey (370 miles)	15	18
Boston to Philadelphia (390 miles)	15	20
Boston to Annapolis (550 miles)	24	36
Boston to Jamestown (680 miles)	24	42
New York to Annapolis (250 miles)	12	24
New York to Jamestown (380 miles)	12	30
Overseas	-	12

Hamilton explained that the high rates to Virginia's capital were due to the "many broad and dangerous Bays and Rivers to be ferryed over". He also requested that the rate for letters to or from Europe or from the West Indies to North America be set at 12d. per single and 18d for a double letter.

In spite of the supporting evidence Hamilton presented to the Postmasters General these honorable gentlemen could not be convinced of the wisdom to increase the rates to the extent suggested. In their reply they stated: "It having been found by Experience in this Office That ye easy and cheap Corresponding doth encourage people to write letters and that this Revenue was but little in proportion to what it now is till the postage was reduced from sixpence to 3d." (d-2)

As a result Neale, who had hoped to make a reasonable return on his investment, soon became unable to meet the financial obligations due to the burdensome American venture and decided to assign his patent to Hamilton and the latter's associate, Richard West. Four years after Hamilton's death in 1703 the British government decided to buy back the contract from the heirs. For the time being the colonies were left on their own.

Postal rates did not change substantially during the interim between 1707, the year that ended the Neale-Hamilton era in America, and the forthcoming Parliamentary decision of 1710. In 1709 the New Jersey assembly passed an act which set the charge for a single letter to Boston at 15 d., one to a destination within 70 miles at 4½ d. and within 150 miles at 9 d., thus holding the old line.

(d-2) A.D.Smith: The Development of Rates of Postage (London, 1917), p.387.

The law of November 25th, 1710, which has been recorded in the history books as "Queen Anne's Act", comingled the British postal services all over the world into one organization under the direction of the Postmasters General in London. Its Preamble read as follows:

> "An Act for establishing a General Post Office for all Her Majesty's Dominions, and for settling a weekly Sum out of the Revenues thereof, for the Service of the War, and other Her Majesty's Occasions."

After London's rejection of Hamilton's rate proposals logic would expect this radical change from the old system to lighten the postal burden resting upon the American letter writer. But whoever cultivated such a hope was badly disappointed. The wording of the law's Preamble and the list of postal charges clearly characterized it as a revenue measure. All rates were higher than they had been before. Some of them, including the transatlantic charges, were doubled. To salve the wound the prospect of a reduction was held out for the year 1743 when some of the government's financial obligations were expected to be fulfilled.

In many colonies the provisions of the act were accepted without much of a stir. They were put into operation by copying them in their own legal records. Virginia, however, was an exception. Though Governor Spotswood urged the Burgesses to drop their opposition the Virginians remained inflexible. They considered the fixing of postal rates by the Parliament without the consent of the colonies an act of taxation and as such unacceptable. By all kind of restrictive measures they made it practically impossible for the post office to operate in Virginia.

But even elsewhere the postal services remained irregular and the hopes of the Lords of the Treasury that the new statute would turn the American postal system into a money-making operation appeared to be a miscalculation. The vague consolation of a rate revision in 1743 satisfied no-one, and when a new postal law was promulgated in 1765, under the reign of king George II, the rates remained substantially the same.

In the mean time Benjamin Franklin became deputy postmaster general in the American colonies as the successor to Elliot Benger. With all the vigor and resourcefulness that characterized this remarkable man he gave himself to the task of improving the postal services. Since the rates of postage heretofore had been porrly publicized he saw to it that a rate schedule was hung on the wall of every post office. Clerical help was almost non-available to the deputy postmaster general. Thus he wrote such announcements in his own hand. A copy, greatly reduced in size, is shown in figure D-4. Dated Boston, 1754, it listed the:

> "Rates for the Post of Single Letters to or from the following Offices conformable to an Act of Parliament made in the Ninth Year of the Reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne Entituled An Act for Establishing a General Post Office for all her Majesty's Dominions."

They were rated in Pennyweights and Grains of Silver at three Pence Sterling for each Pennyweight and in shillings and pence in a 2nd column.

Anno Regni
ANNÆ
REGINÆ
Magnæ Britanniæ, Franciæ, & Hiberniæ,
NONO.

At the Parliament Begun and Holden at *Weſtminſter*, the Twenty fifth Day of *November*, *Anno Dom.* 1710. In the Ninth Year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lady *ANNE*, by the Grace of God, of *Great Britain*, *France*, and *Ireland*, Queen, Defender of the Faith, &c. being the Firſt Seſſion of this preſent Parliament.

LONDON,
Printed by the Aſſigns of *Thomas Newcomb*, and *Henry Hills*, deceas'd; Printers to the Queens moſt Excellent Majeſty. 1711.

D-3a. Title leaf of Queen Anne's Postal Law, 1711. (A.R.Kantor).

59

Boston Post Office 1754

Rates for the Port of Single Letters to or from the following Offices Conformable to an Act of Parliament made in the Ninth Year of the Reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne Entituled An Act for Establishing a General Post Office for all her Majesty's Dominions

Rated in Penny weights and Grains of Silver at three Pence Sterling for each Penny weight

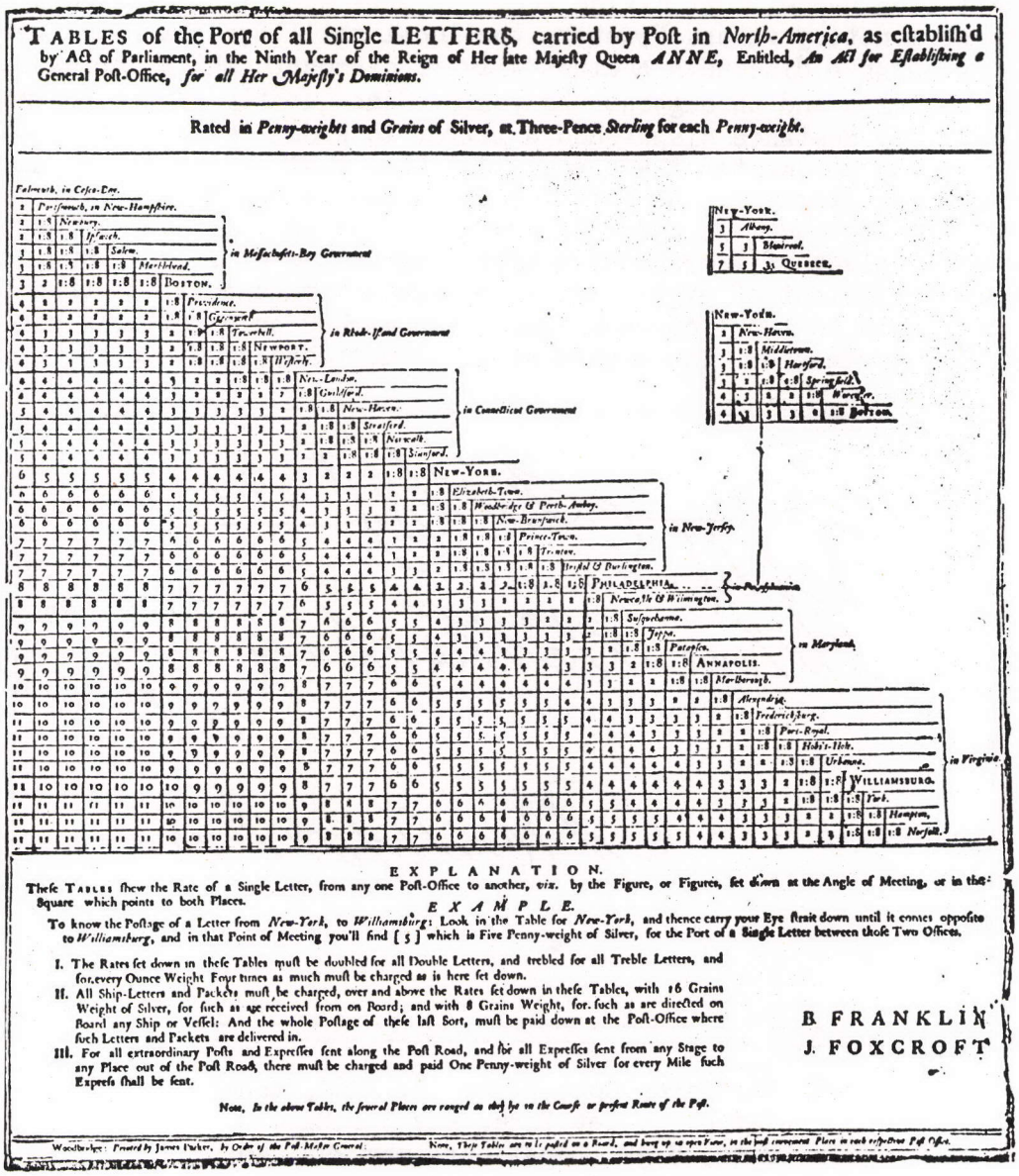
	Dwts of Silver	Grains	£	s	d
Portsmouth and all the intermediate Offices	1	8		0	0 is 4
Providence	1	8		0	0 4
Newport	2			0	0 6
New London	3			0	0 9
New York	1			0	1 0
Woodridge	5			0	1 3
Boston	6			0	1 6
Philadelphia	7			0	1 9
Annapolis	8			0	2 0
Alexandria	9			0	2 3
Fredricksburg	9			0	2 3
Williamsburg	10			0	2 6
York Town	10			0	2 6
Hamilton	10			0	2 6
Norfolk	10			0	2 6

The Rates mentioned above must be doubled for all Double Letters and Tripled for all treble Letters and for each ounce weight four times as much must be charged as for a Single Letter

All Ships Letters and Parkets must be charged Cover and above the aforementioned Rates with 8 Grains weight of Silver for such as are received from on board and with 8 Grains weight each for such as are directed on Board any Ships or Vessell

And the whole Postage of the last mentioned to other Offices must be Paid down at the Post Office where such Letters and Parkets are delivered in

D-4. 1754 Broadside, handwritten by deputy postmaster Benjamin Franklin, announcing postage rates effective at that time.



TABLES of the Post of all Single LETTERS, carried by Post in *North-America*, as eſtabliſh'd by Act of Parliament, in the Ninth Year of the Reign of Her late Majeſty Queen *ANNE*, Entitled, *An Act for Eſtabliſhing a* General Poſt-Office, *for all Her Majeſty's Dominions.*

Rated in *Penny-weights* and *Grains* of Silver, at Three-Pence *Sterling* for each *Penny-weight.*

EXPLANATION.

These TABLES ſhew the Rate of a Single Letter, from any one Poſt-Office to another, *viz.* by the Figure, or Figures, ſet down at the Angle of Meeting, or in the Square which points to both Places.

EXAMPLE.

To know the Poſtage of a Letter from *New-York*, to *Williamsburg*: Look in the Table for *New-York*, and thence carry your Eye ſtrait down until it comes oppoſite to *Williamsburg*, and in that Point of Meeting you'll find [5] which is Five Penny-weight of Silver, for the Port of a Single Letter between thoſe Two Offices.

I. The Rates ſet down in theſe Tables muſt be doubled for all Double Letters, and trebled for all Treble Letters, and for every Ounce Weight Four times as much muſt be charged as is here ſet down.

II. All Ship-Letters and Packets muſt be charged, over and above the Rates ſet down in theſe Tables, with 16 Grains Weight of Silver, for ſuch as are received from on Board; and with 8 Grains Weight, for ſuch as are directed on Board any Ship or Veſſel: And the whole Poſtage of theſe laſt Sort, muſt be paid down at the Poſt-Office where ſuch Letters and Packets are delivered in.

III. For all extraordinary Poſts and Expreſſes ſent along the Poſt Road, and for all Expreſſes ſent from any Stage to any Place out of the Poſt Road, there muſt be charged and paid One Penny-weight of Silver for every Mile ſuch Expreſs ſhall be ſent.

B. FRANKLIN
J. FOXCROFT

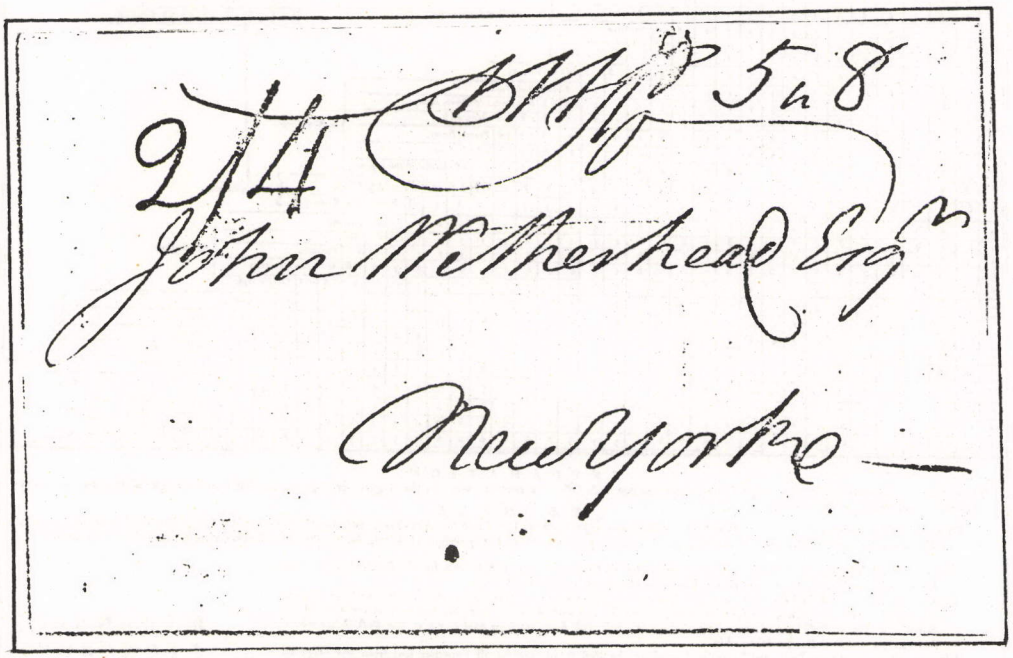
Note, In the above Table, the ſeveral Places are ranged as they lye to the Courſe or preſent Route of the Poſt.

Woodbridge: Printed by James Parker. *By Order of the Poſt-Maſter General.* Note, *Theſe Tables are to be paſted on a Board, and hung up in open View, in the moſt convenient Place in each reſpective Poſt Office.*

D-5. Broadside by deputy postmasters general Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft, printed by James Parker of Woodbridge, showing postage rates between American post offices. Dated 1763. (Copied from Postal Markings).

The introduction of this dual system of postal rates became a matter of great importance throughout the colonial and pre-statehood years. the subject has been treated in the existing literature in a somewhat Cinderella-like fashion. Yet a sound understanding of it is needed for the proper interpretation of the rate markings appearing on so many letter covers of the period.

The official currency in use in the American colonies was the same as in England: the pound sterling, equal to twenty shillings, and each shilling worth twelve pence. Post office accounts were supposed to be kept in these units of monetary value. However, the local shillings and pence were subject to considerable discounts against silver, discounts which varied in the several colonies and throughout the years. Consequently if the postmaster in New York for instance dispatched a letter to Rhode Island and rated it one shilling the postmaster there would not know what to charge the addressee, one shilling sterling, one shilling as valued in New York, or its equivalent in his own province. In order to preclude such problems rates were expressed in stable values of Troy penny weights and grains of silver, one penny being the equivalent of eight grains. Though not mandatory the translation of the Troy rate to local currency was often marked on a letter's cover by the receiving postmaster. The procedure is illustrated in figure D-6.



D-6. Hartford, Conn., May 29, 1769, double letter to New York, May 31. Rated 5 dwts, 8 gr. Local currency 2sh. 4d. (E.N.Sampson).

The above letter was rated in Hartford, Conn. 5 pennyweights and 8 grains, but when it arrived in New York the postmaster entered 2 shillings 4 pence in his books, which indicates that the discount rate at that time was 1.7 (5 dwts, 8 grs = 16 pence, and 2 sh. 4d. = 28d.).

A royal pledge, made in 1711, to reduce the postal rates at a future

From the WHITEHALL EVENING POST, *June* 13, 1765.

General Poſt-Office, June 8, 1765.

PUBLICK Notice is hereby given, That by an Act paſſed the laſt Seſſion of Parliament, "For altering certain Rates of Poſtage, and for amending, explaining and enlarging ſeveral Proviſions in the Act of the Ninth of Queen Anne, and other Acts relating to the Poſt-Office;" It is, amongſt other Things, enacted,

That Letters between London and any Port within the Britiſh Dominions in America, (in which all His Majeſty's Weſt-India Iſlands are included) ſhall pay Single One Shilling, Double Two Shillings, Treble Three Shillings, the Ounce Four Shillings.

That Letters by Sea, from any one Port to any other Port within the ſaid Dominions, ſhall pay Single Four Pence, Double Eight Pence, Treble One Shilling, the Ounce One Shilling and Four Pence.

That Letters by Land, to or from any chief Poſt-Office in America, from or to any other Part thereof not exceeding ſixty Miles from ſuch chief Poſt-Office, or from the Office where ſuch Letters not paſſing through a chief Office, may be put in, ſhall pay Single Four Pence, Double Eight Pence, Treble One Shilling, the Ounce One Shilling and Four Pence. And being upwards of Sixty, and not exceeding one hundred Miles within the ſaid Dominions, ſhall pay Single Six-pence, Double One Shilling, Treble Eighteen Pence, the Ounce Two Shillings. And being upwards of one Hundred, and not exceeding two hundred Miles within the ſaid Dominions, ſhall pay Single Eight Pence, Double One Shilling and Four Pence, Treble Two Shillings, the Ounce Two Shillings and Eight Pence. And for every Diſtance not exceeding one hundred Miles above ſuch two Hundred, and for every ſuch further Diſtance within the ſaid Dominions, ſhall pay Single Two Pence, Double Four Pence, Treble Six-pence, the Ounce Eight Pence.

That no Veſſel ſhall be permitted to break Bulk, or make Entry in any Port within the Britiſh Dominions, where Poſts are or may be eſtabliſhed, until all Letters on Board are delivered to the Poſt-Maſter of ſuch Port (he paying the Bringer One Penny for each Letter) to be forwarded according to their reſpective Directions, except ſuch as are excepted by the Act of the Ninth of Queen Anne; and ſuch as may be brought by Veſſels liable to Quarantine, which laſt are to be delivered to the Perſons ſuperintending the Quarantine, for proper Care, before they are forwarded by the Poſt. And that all Maſters, Mariners, Paſſengers, &c. neglecting to deliver the Letters as aforeſaid, ſhall for every Neglect forfeit Twenty Pounds.

That the Poſt-Maſter ſhall take for every Letter brought by ſuch Veſſel, for any Place within his Delivery, One Penny, above the Penny paid to the Maſter or other Perſon for the ſame.

D-7

Public Notice in the British Newspapers of the Post Office Act of 1765 by the Secretary to the Postmaster General.

(continued)

That Letters conveyed in Great-Britain and Ireland, not exceeding one Stage, ſhall pay Single One Penny, Double Two Pence, Treble Three Pence, the Ounce Four Pence. And in England, above one, and not exceeding two Stages, Single Two Pence, Double Four Pence, Treble Six-pence, the Ounce Eight Pence; but theſe Rates are not to affect the Penny-Poſt.

That Letters paſſing between England and Ireland, through Carliſle, Dumfries, Port Patrick, and Donaghadee, ſhall pay the ſame Rates of Engliſh, Scotch, Iriſh, and Packet Poſtage, according to the Diſtance or Number of Stages they are conveyed in each Kingdom, as are ſettled by the Act of the Ninth of Queen Anne, or by this Act.

That no Packet exceeding the Weight of four Ounces ſhall be ſent by the Penny-Poſt, unleſs coming from, or paſſing thereby to the General Poſt.

That Letters paſſing between London and Hamburgh ſhall pay as Letters between London and all other Parts of Germany, viz. Single One Shilling, Double Two Shillings, Treble Three Shillings, the Ounce Four Shillings.

That any Officer of the Poſt-Office ſecreting or deſtroying any Letter, Bag or Mail of Letters, containing any Bank Note, Bill or other Paper, Writing, or Order for the Payment of Money, or ſtealing out of any Letter any ſuch Bank Note, Bill, &c. on Conviction, ſhall ſuffer Death as a Felon.

That any Perſon robbing a Mail, in any Place or in any Manner whatſoever, although it may not appear that any one was put in Fear by ſuch Robbery, ſhall, on Conviction, ſuffer Death as a Felon.

That any Officer of the Poſt-Office, entruſted to take in Letters, and receive the Poſtage thereof, embezzeling the Money received, or deſtroying the Letters; or any Officer advancing the Rates on Letters, and not accounting for the advanced Poſtage, ſhall, on Conviction, be deemed guilty of Felony.

That any Poſt-Boy having a Mail or Bag of Letters under his Care, deſerting the ſame before his Arrival at the next Stage; or ſuffering any other Perſon to ride on the Horſe or Carriage along therewith; or loitering on the Road; or not, in all poſſible Caſes, conveying the Mail after the Rate of ſix meaſured Miles an Hour, ſhall, on Conviction, before one Juſtice of the Peace, be ſent to the Houſe of Correction for any Time not exceeding one Month, nor leſs than fourteen Days.

That any Poſt-Boy, ſingle, or in Combination with others, unlawfully collecting, or conveying Letters, or cauſing the ſame to be unlawfully conveyed, ſhall, on Conviction before one Juſtice of the Peace, forfeit Ten Shillings, to be paid to the Informer, for every Letter ſo unlawfully collected, conveyed, or delivered. And if the Forfeiture is not immediately paid, ſhall be ſent to the Houſe of Correction, for any Time not exceeding two Months, nor leſs than one Month.

That all Rates of Letters, and all Forfeitures, mentioned in this Act, ſhall be paid in Sterling Money of Great-Britain.

The Rates eſtabliſhed by this Act for the Port of Letters between London and Hamburgh; and the Limitation of the Weight of Packets to be ſent by the Penny-Poſt, commence from the fifth of July next. All other Regulations, Rates of Poſtage, Pains, Penalties, and Forfeitures before-mentioned, commence from the tenth Day of October next.

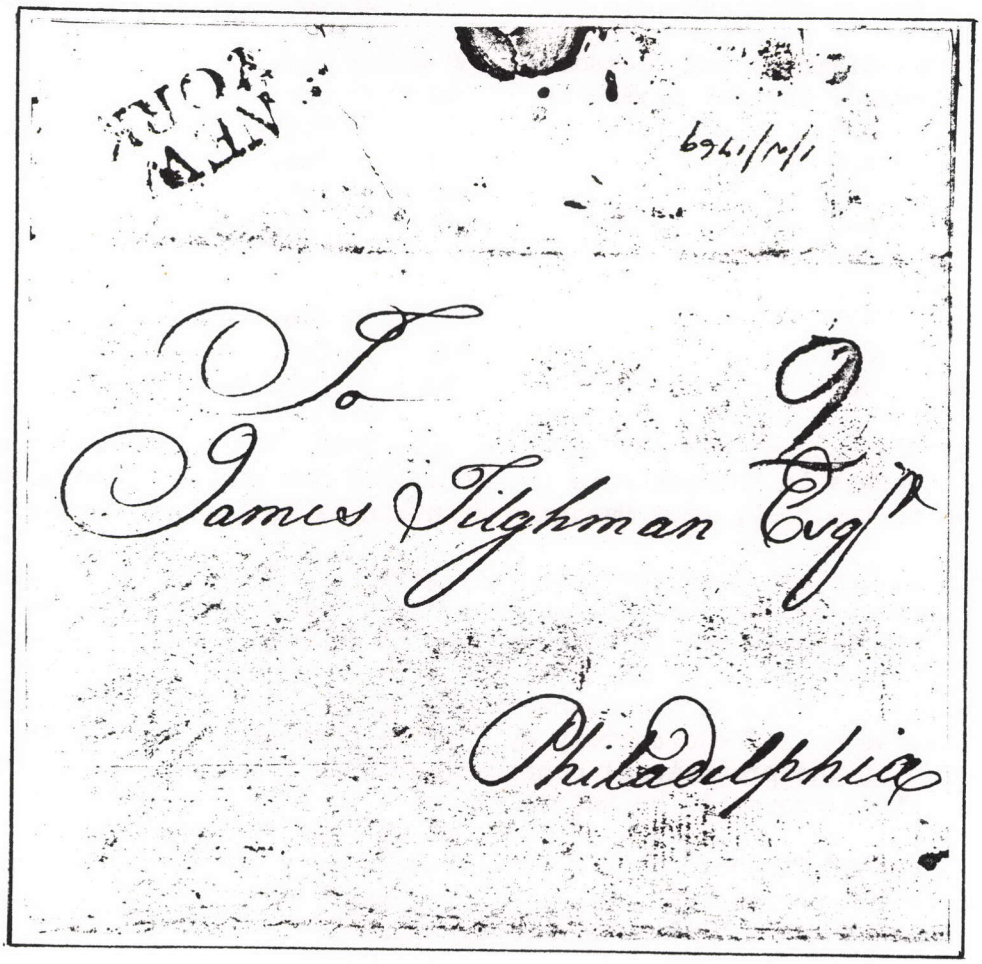
By Command of the Poſt-Maſter-General,

ANTHONY TODD, Secretary.

date was finally redeemed in 1765, though 24 years later than had been held out as a prospect at that time. Benjamin proved to have been successful in convincing the fiscal and postal authorities in London when he stated "that the mail carriage would rise in bulk with the fall in charge for service so that revenue would increase rather than diminish." (d-3)

The postal act of 1765 (figure D-7) eased the postal burden of the colonies somewhat. The effect of this measure is demonstrated by comparing the rate applied to a letter from New York to Philadelphia in 1760 (see cover NY 9, Part II) and the postage on the letter shown on this page (figure D-8) for the same distance.

A new situation rate-wise develpped when William Goddard in-



D-8. NEW/YORK, 24 x 12½, black, on reverse, January 2, 1769, to Philadelphia, January 5. Rate 2 dwts. (Henry Yeager).

(d-3) Ruth Lapham Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), p. 100.

troduced his "New American Post Office" to the colonies in close cooperation with the local Committees of Correspondence. His revolutionary ideas, which included a complete take-over of the postal services from the British administration. A number of local governments endorsed Goddard's plan, though hesitatingly. The breakthrough came after Lexington and Concord in 1775 when the majority of the post offices , as far south as Williamsburg, joined those of Philadelphia and Baltimore, where the aggressive idealist booked his first successes. In the city of New York the British postmaster realized that there no longer was any place for him on Manhattan and thus retired to a British warship which was anchored in the harbor. He left the postal field to John Holt, who was selected by the local government in sympathy with Goddard's plan.

Nothing has been recorded so far as to why Goddard dropped the Troy system of rating. As a result Massachusetts published its schedule of postal charges in shillings and pence local currency. It is shown here:

Any distance not exceeding	50 miles	5½d.
Over 60 but not exceeding	100	8d.
100	200	10½d.
200	300	1sh. 1d.
300	400	1sh. 4d.
400	500	1sh. 6½d.
500	600	1sh. 9d.
600	700	2sh.
700	800	2sh. 2½d.
800	900	2sh. 5d.
900	1000	2sh. 8d.

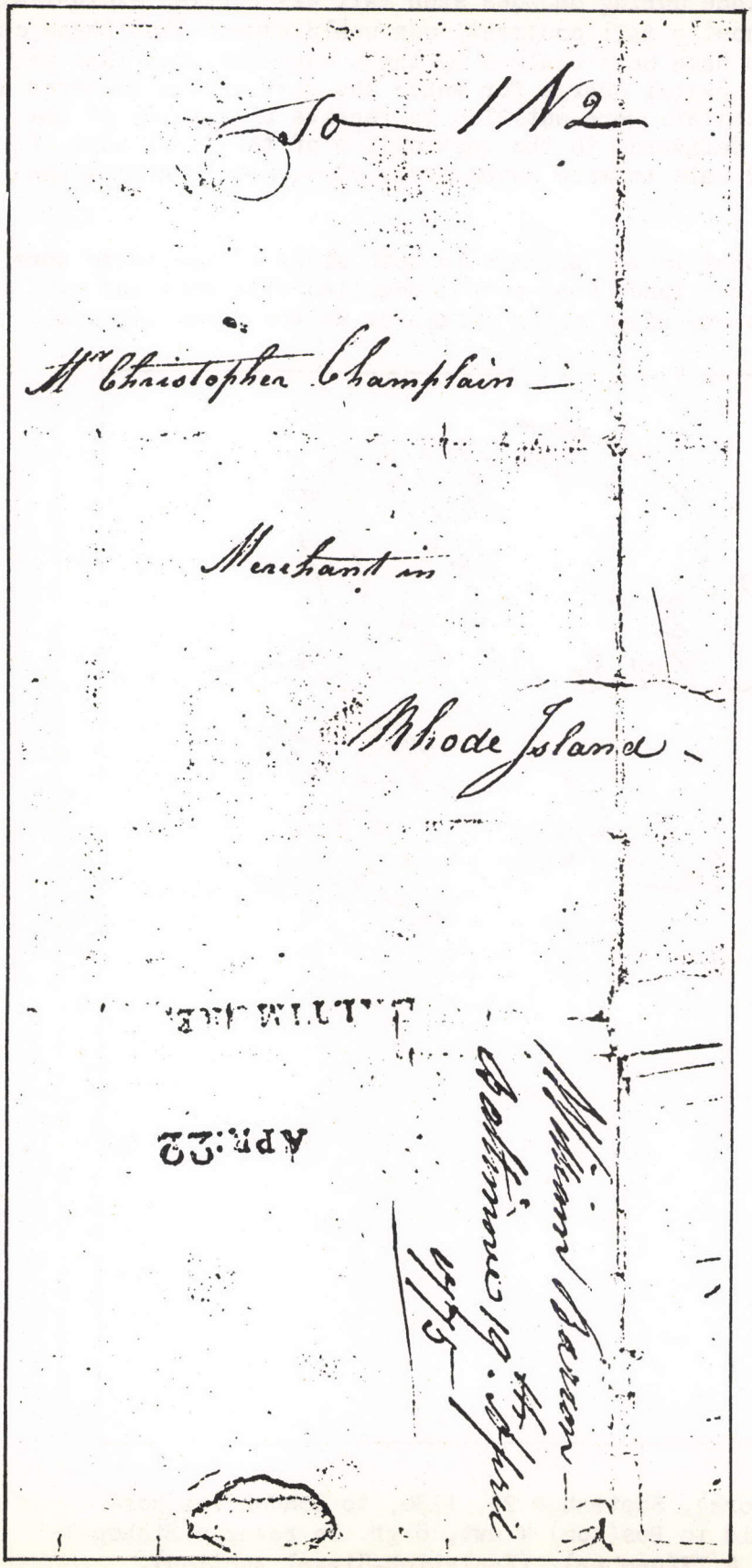
Goddard's success did not last. On July 25th, 1775, the second Continental Congress in Philadelphia published its own plan for the Americanization of the post, with Benjamin Franklin as Postmaster General.

Not many letters have survived that were processed during Goddard's revolutionary operations in offices that had adopted his system. Not all of them can easily be identified as such. The appearance of rate markings in shillings and pence of 1774-75 covers and the absence of Troy rates are fairly reliable yardsticks in cases of doubt. The type of handstamps which were used exclusively by certain postmasters during the short period of the provisional congressional post, as it often has been called, at times proves to be helpful.too.

The cover of figure D-9 is a good example of a letter posted during this interesting period. The rate of 1 shilling 1d. covered the 400-500 miles distance between Baltimore and Newport.

Before pursuing the history of the postage rates applied to letters which found their way within the colonies it is necessary to go back to the mid-century years when a significant change was brought about in the handling and transportation of the trans-atlantic mail. A separate Chapter is devoted to this subject. However, little is said in it about the rates of postage which were applied to such letters.

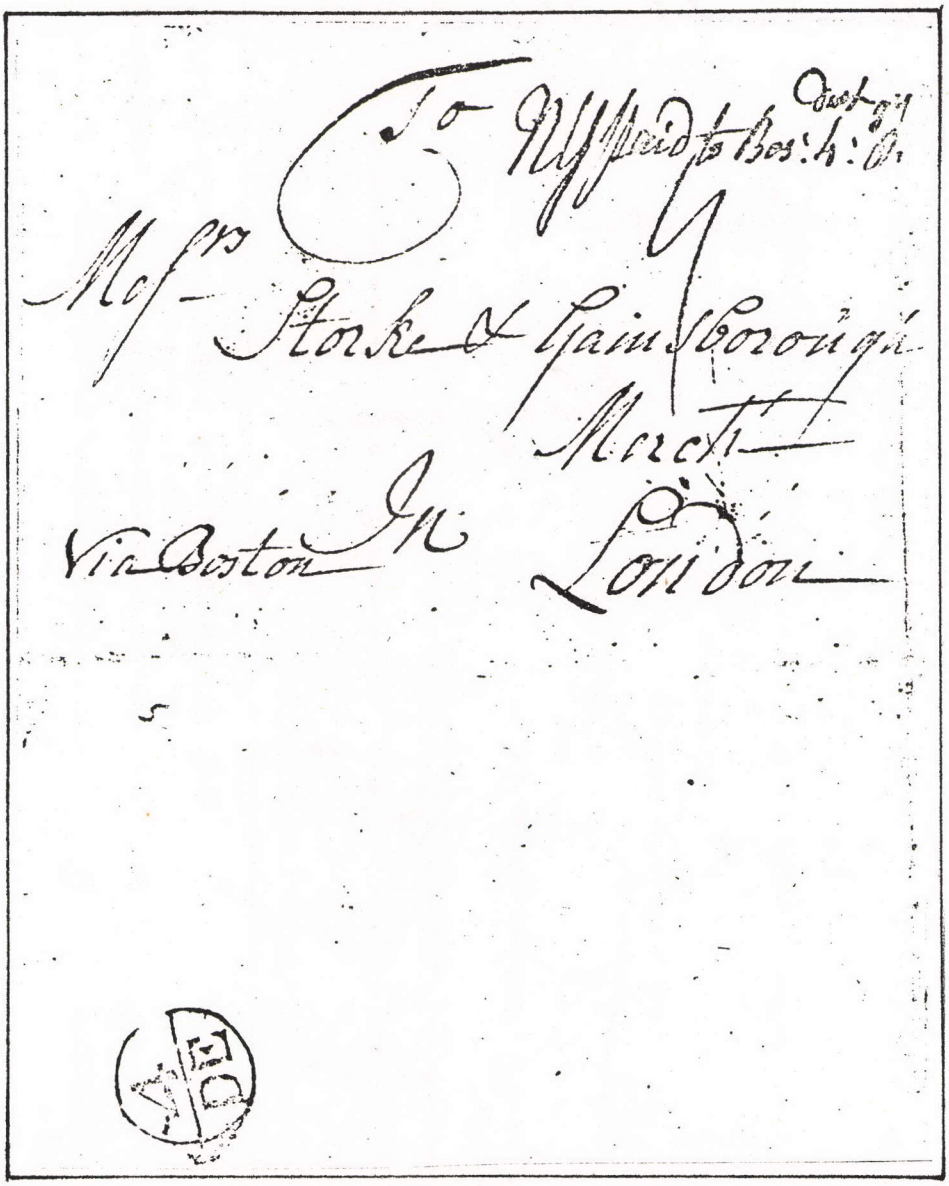
The act of 1710, which carries the name of Queen Anne, established a



D-9. BALTIMORE, 33 x 3, B 4½, black, APR:22, 1775, to (Newport) Rhose Island, Rate 1N2. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence).

rate of one shilling for a single letter carried between England and the colonies, vice versa. Letters consisting of more than one sheet were charged proportionally. Since during decades such mail was carried exclusively by private ships, without a mail contract, one would expect that these one shilling amounts would have been claimed by their captains. But that was not the case. It was a postal charge for which the post office rendered no services. The ships' masters were entitled to receive a gratuity of one penny for each letter delivered to the post office of the first port of call. This ship letter rate is more extensively discussed in a separate Chapter.

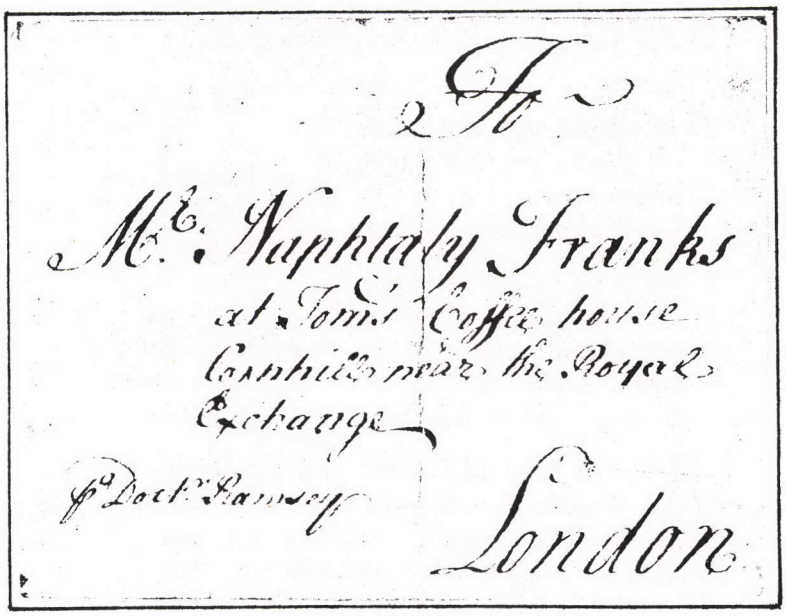
It is no wonder that letter writers on both sides of the ocean were bitter about these regulations. Some people complied with them and paid the high charges either to the dispatching office or to the receiving one.



D-10. N(ew)Y(ork), September 29, 1736, to London via Boston. Paid to Bos(ton) 4 dwt, 8 gr. On reverse Bishop marking 4/DE(cember). (Faulstich-Siegel Auction).

The cover shown in figure D-10 is an example of a trans-atlantic letter for which one shilling was paid. It is dated New York, September 27, 1736 and was sent to London via Boston. It arrived on December 4th. The sender had prepaid the inland postage of 4 dwts plus the "8 grains weight, for (letters) such as are directed on Board any Ship or Vessel" (see figure D-5, sub II). The addressee was charged one shilling (see the 1/ scratch, which gradually developed into the N marking found on so many trans-atlantic letters) by the London post office.

However, several correspondents in this country and in England found ways to circumvent the unreasonably high charges by making private arrangements with ship's captains or passengers. They requested them to deliver their messages to local taverns or coffeehouses. The cover of figure D-8 belongs in this category. Written in new York, April 11, 1735 it was delivered at "Tom's Coffeehouse on Cornhill, near the Royal Exchange."



D-11. New York, April 11, 1735, by passenger to London, to be delivered at a coffee house. (American Jewish Historical Society).

As so often was the case the threat of war caused British officials in the General Post Office to pay extra attention to the speediest and safest carriage of "intelligence". When in 1755 a serious conflict developed between Great Britain and France the Treasury and the Postmasters General seriously considered a complete change-over from the heretofore exclusive use of private shipping to a program of carrying the trans-atlantic mail by packet boats in a government-operated monthly service between Falmouth, on the English south coast, and the port of New York, and similarly to Charleston, S.C. via the West Indies. These plans came to fruition in January 1756. From then on these light but fast sailing vessels carried the mail vice versa with more or less regularity. Its story is told in a separate Chapter.

Dated London, October 24, 1755, an announcement appeared in the American

General-Poſt-Office, London Oct. 24, 1755.

WHEREAS a Number of Pacquet-Boats are provided and eſtabliſhed, at Falmouth, for carrying on a regular Monthly Correſpondence between theſe Kingdoms, and his Majeſty's Iſlands in the Weſt-Indies; and alſo to and from the ſeveral Colonies in the Continent of North-America.

Publick Notice is hereby given to all Merchants, and others whom it may concern, that Letters and Packets for the ſaid Iſlands, and Colonies on the Continent of North-America, will be taken in and received at this Office, from the Date hereof, upon their being paid for, after the Rates, ſettled by Act of Parliament, as undermentioned, viz.

		s. d.
From London to the Iſlands of Barbados, Antigua, Montſerrat, Nevis, St. Chriſtophers and Jamaica,	For a Single Letter	1 6
	a Double Letter	3 0
	a Treble Letter	4 6
	an Ounce	6 0
From London to New-York, New-England, Virginia, Maryland, and all the other Colonies on the Continent of N. America.	For a Single Letter	1 0
	a Double Letter	2 0
	a Treble Letter	3 0
	an Ounce	4 0

The firſt Mail of Letters, for the ſeveral Iſlands in the Weſt-Indies, will be made up and diſpatched from this Office, upon Saturday the 8th Day of November next, and be continued on the firſt Saturday of every Month following.

The firſt Mail of Letters, by the way of New-York, for the ſeveral Colonies on the Continent of North-America will be made up and diſpatched from this Office, upon the 15th of the ſaid Month of November next, and ſo be continued on the Second Saturday of every Month through the Year.

The full Poſtage of the above Letters and Packets muſt be paid at the Time of their Delivery into this Office, or at the Receiving-Houſes in Town: And all ſuch as are put into the ſeveral Poſt-Houſes in Great-Britain and Ireland, muſt over and above the ſaid Rates, pay alſo the full Inland Poſtage to London, without which they cannot be forwarded from hence.

D-12

By Command of the Poſt-Maſter-General,
GEORGE SHELVOCKE, *Secretary.*

newspapers which set forth the postage rates applicable to the new service (figure D-12). It should be noticed that the closing paragraph stated that packet rates as well as domestic postage had to be paid in advance.

With much more sense than before trans-atlantic letters were charged postage at a basic rate of one shilling; more sense because now the General Post Office footed the bill for the service. The annual cost of the New York run alone amounted to 6,500 pounds sterling, not considering the demurrage charges which at times averaged 40 % of the contract payments (d-3).

Two packet letters to London, both originating in New York, are exhibited in figures D-13 and D-14. They show respectively the normal rate of one shilling, and the very unusual charge of 13 shillings, the latter due to the letter's weight of $13\frac{1}{4}$ ounces. Another interesting packet letter is depicted in figure D-15. It went from London via Falmouth to Charlestown, S.C. and from there to Edenton, N.C. Since it held more than one sheet the trans-atlantic postage amounted to 3 shillings. Inland postage was 6N (unexplainably high). The two bishop markings clearly show that the letter needed $2\frac{1}{2}$ months to reach Charlestown. Maritime data as reported by the South Carolina Gazette offer no explanation for the letter's late arrival there. It should also be noticed that the Charlestown post office did not rate the postage in Troy weights, but in shillings, a marked difference from the custom prevailing in the northern colonies. The 12/- notation on the cover denotes a discount factor of 2 against silver for the local shilling. This was but the beginning of a gradually worsening trend.

The introduction of the packet service made it necessary to set appropriate rules for the payment of trans-atlantic postage. Heretofore the receiver of an overseas letter used to pay the postal charges and the sender used to pay only the inland postage from his home town to the port of sailing. Dated February 12, 1756, an announcement appeared in the newspapers, signed by William Franklin, Benjamin's son, on behalf of the deputy postmasters general, informing the piblic that "the full Postage from New York to London must be paid at the Time they are put into the Post Office ... without which they cannot be forwarded."

To prove that a sender had complied with the prepayment provision endorsements appeared on letter-covers, first in manuscript (figure D-10), later handstamped. In Great Britain an encircled PD marking came into use (figure D-17), and a few years later another type of circular imprint, either with POST/PAID or PORT/PAID (figure D-18) appeared.

In the colonies more elaborate markings were applied on letters with a European destination. The earliest carried the inscription "AMERICAN POSTAGE PAID" within a circle with a diameter of 25 mm. which is shown in figure D-19 on a letter from Fredericksburg, Va. to London (d-4), dated

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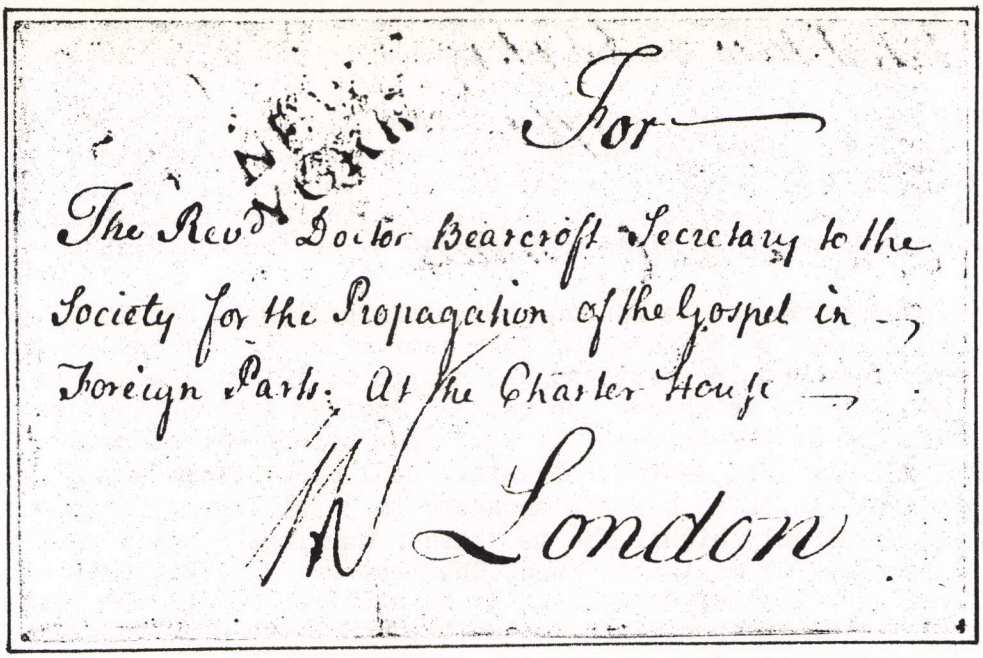
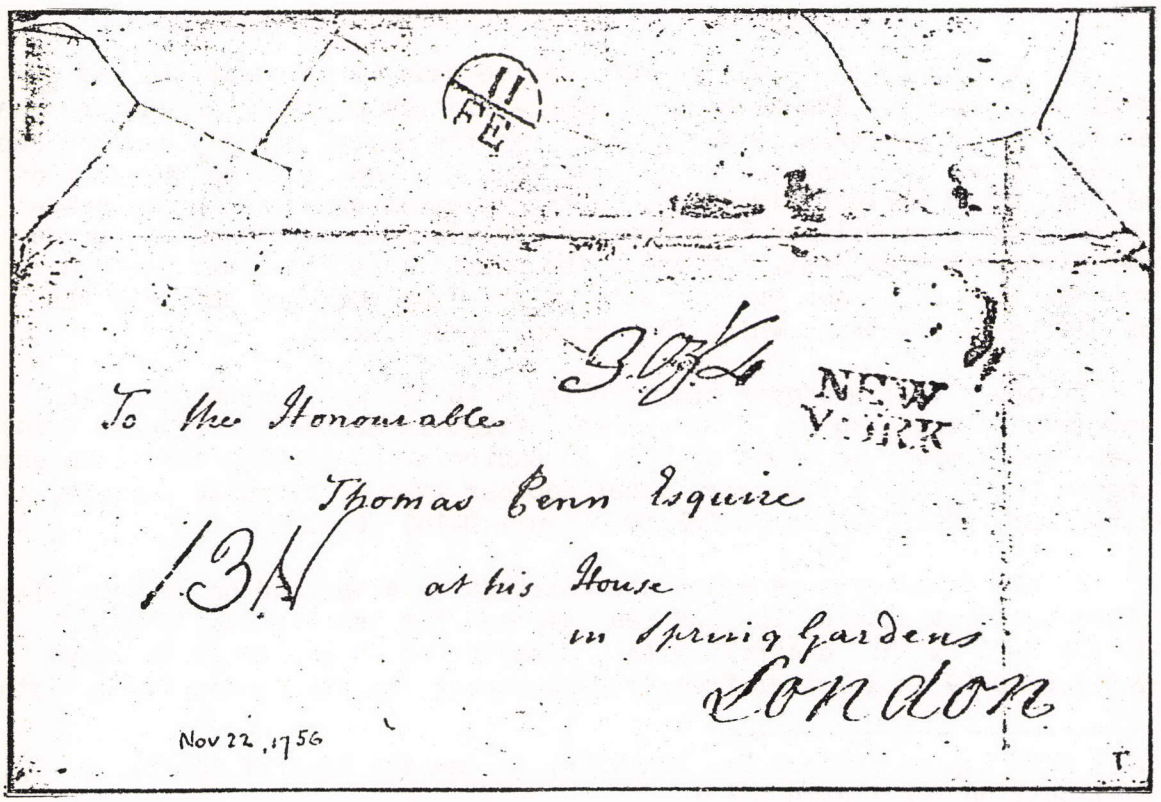
(d-3) Ruth Lapham Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), p. 67.

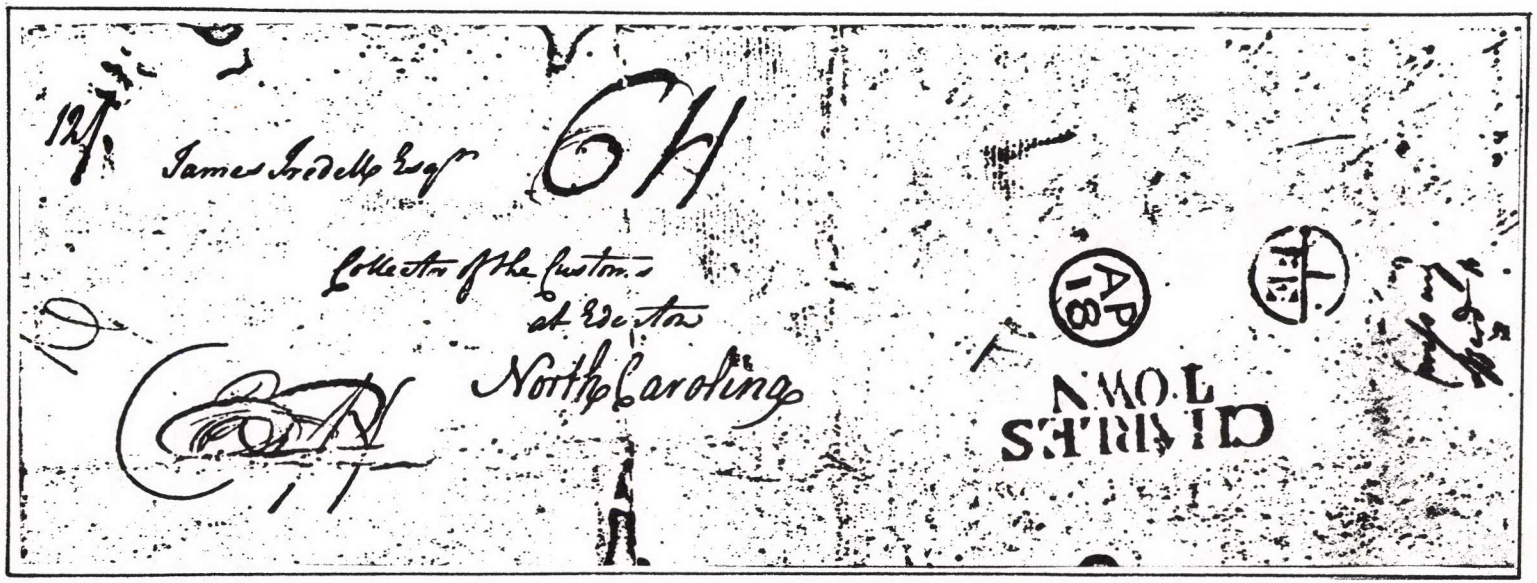
(d-4) Cutline for figure D-19:
Fred(dereicksbur)g, February 22, 1770, via NEW/YORK, black, 24 x 12, Bishop mark 14/MR, to London, Bishop mark 4/VI, prepaid quadruple 20 dwts + 4N. Circular PAID/AMERICAN-POSTAGE, black.
(Colonial Williamsburg Archives).



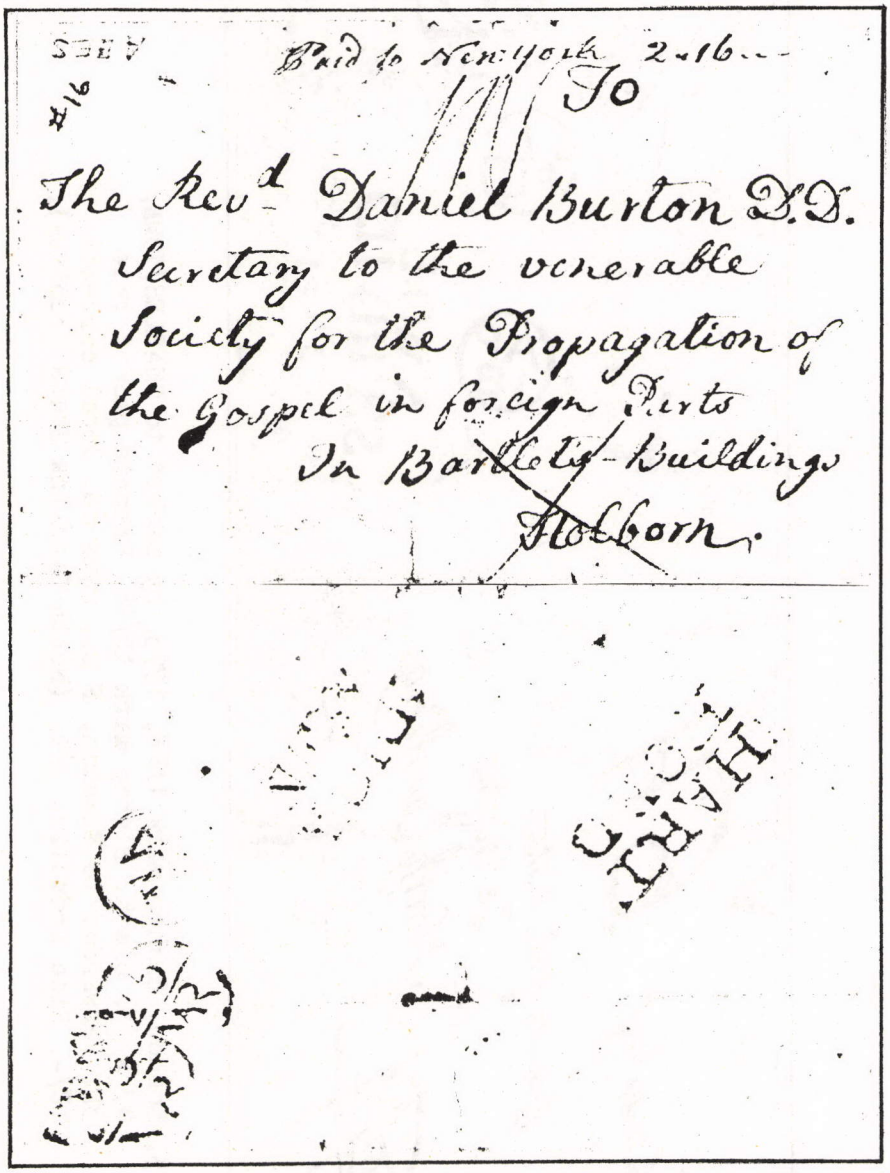
D-13. NEW/YORK, 24 x 12, black, September 19, 1761, by packet to London, December 11. Rate 1N. (C.F.Meroni, Chicago).



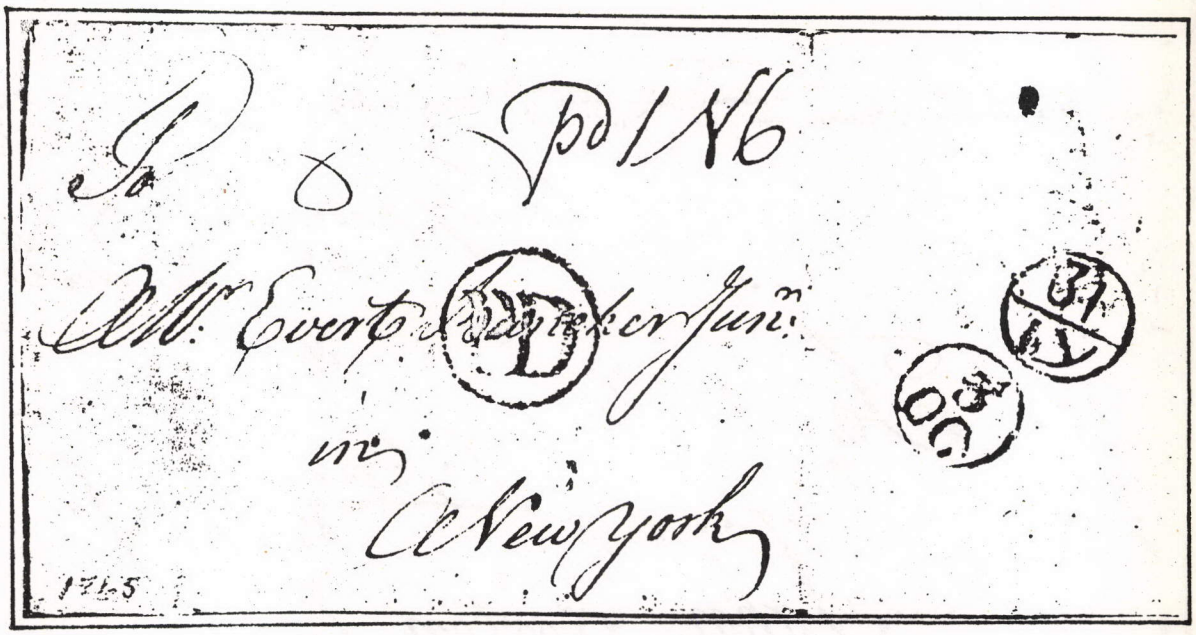
D-14. NEW/YORK, 26 x 12½, black, November 22, 1756, by packet to London, February 1, 1757. 30¼ oz. hence rate 13N. (Reduced) (Edwin Mayer, New York).



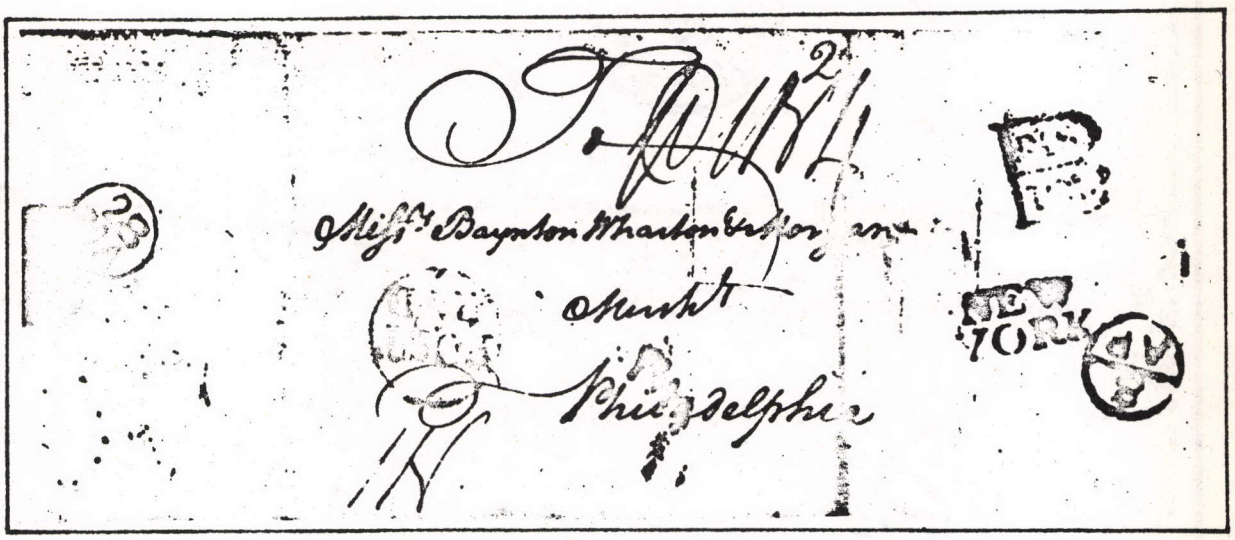
D-13. London, Bishop mark 1/FE, 1775, by packet to CHARLES/TOWN, 47 x 15, black, Bishop mark AP/18. Prepaid packet rate 3N. Forwarded to Edenton, N.C., rate 6N, local currency 12/-. Size reduction 3/4. (North Carolina State Archives).



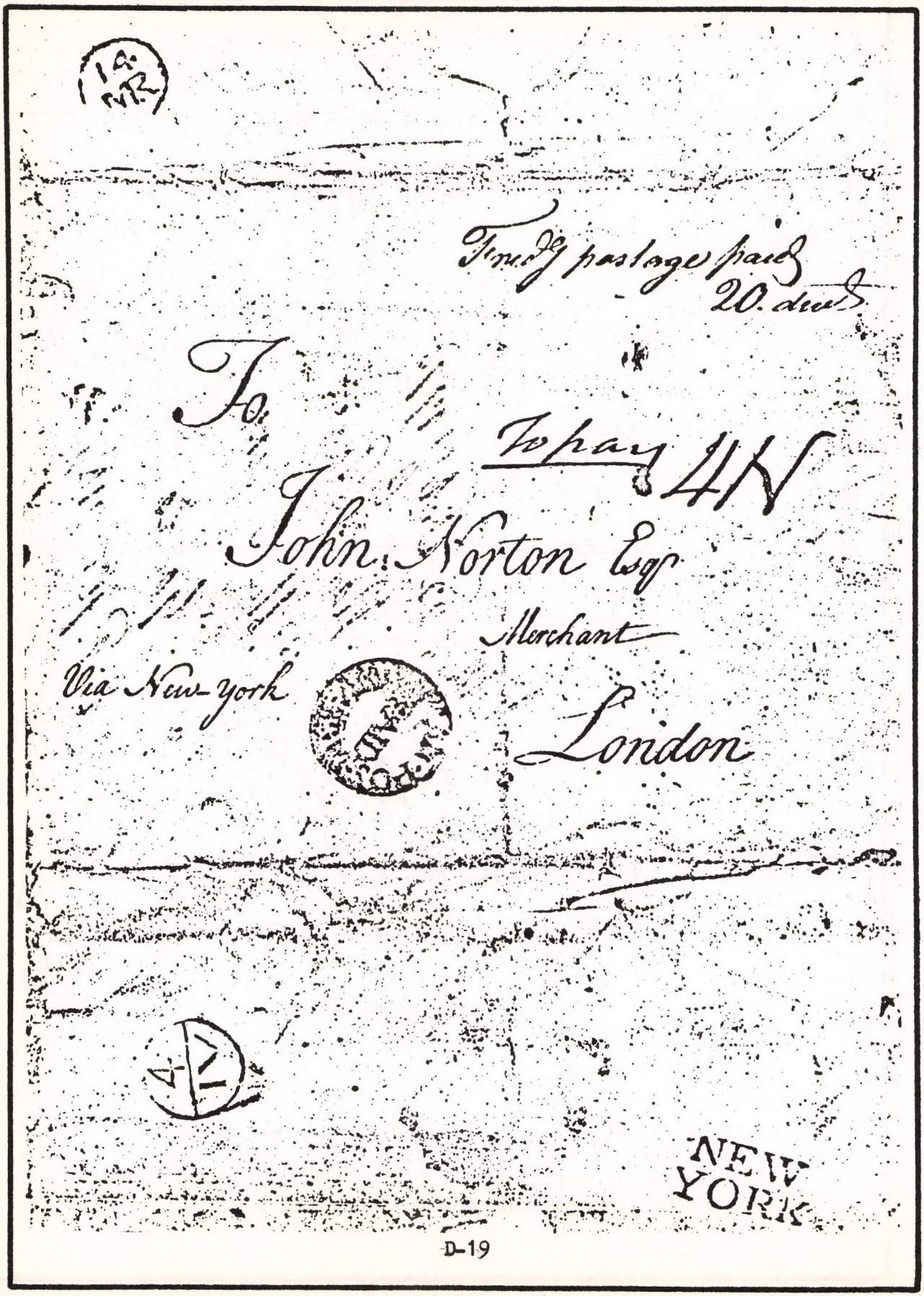
D-16. Simsbury, Conn., December 26, 1767, to Holborn, England, via HART/FORD, 28 x 12, black, and NEW/YORK, 26 x 12½, black, Bishop mark 4/FE. London Bishop mark 25/MA, all on reverse. Paid to New York 2 dwts. 16 gr. Packet rate 1N. (J.H.Smith).

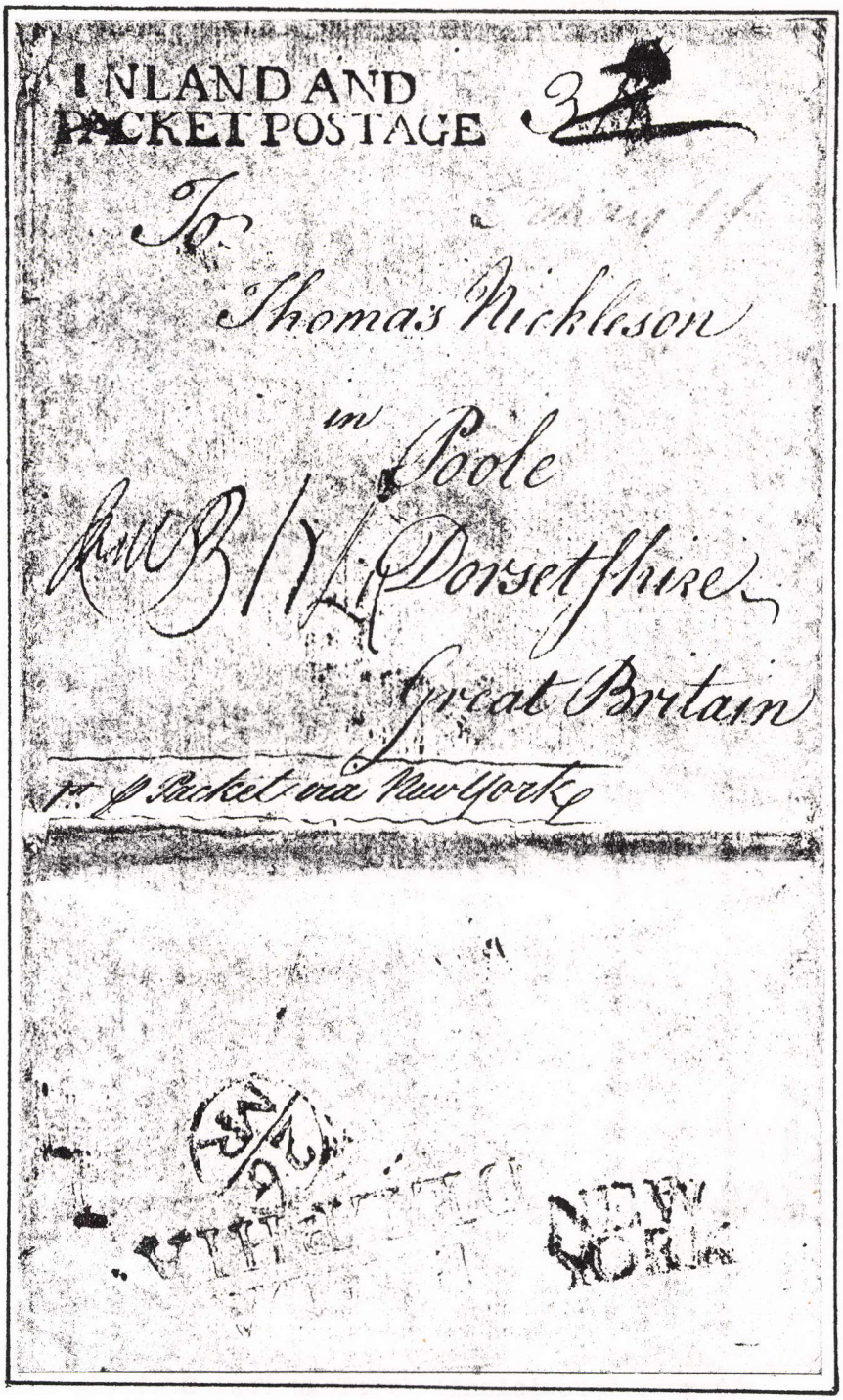


D-17. Dunbar, Scotl., July 26, 1765, via London, Bishop mark 31/IY, to New York, Bishop mark 3/OC. p(aid)d 1N6. PD in circle, black. (Faulstich-Siegel auction).

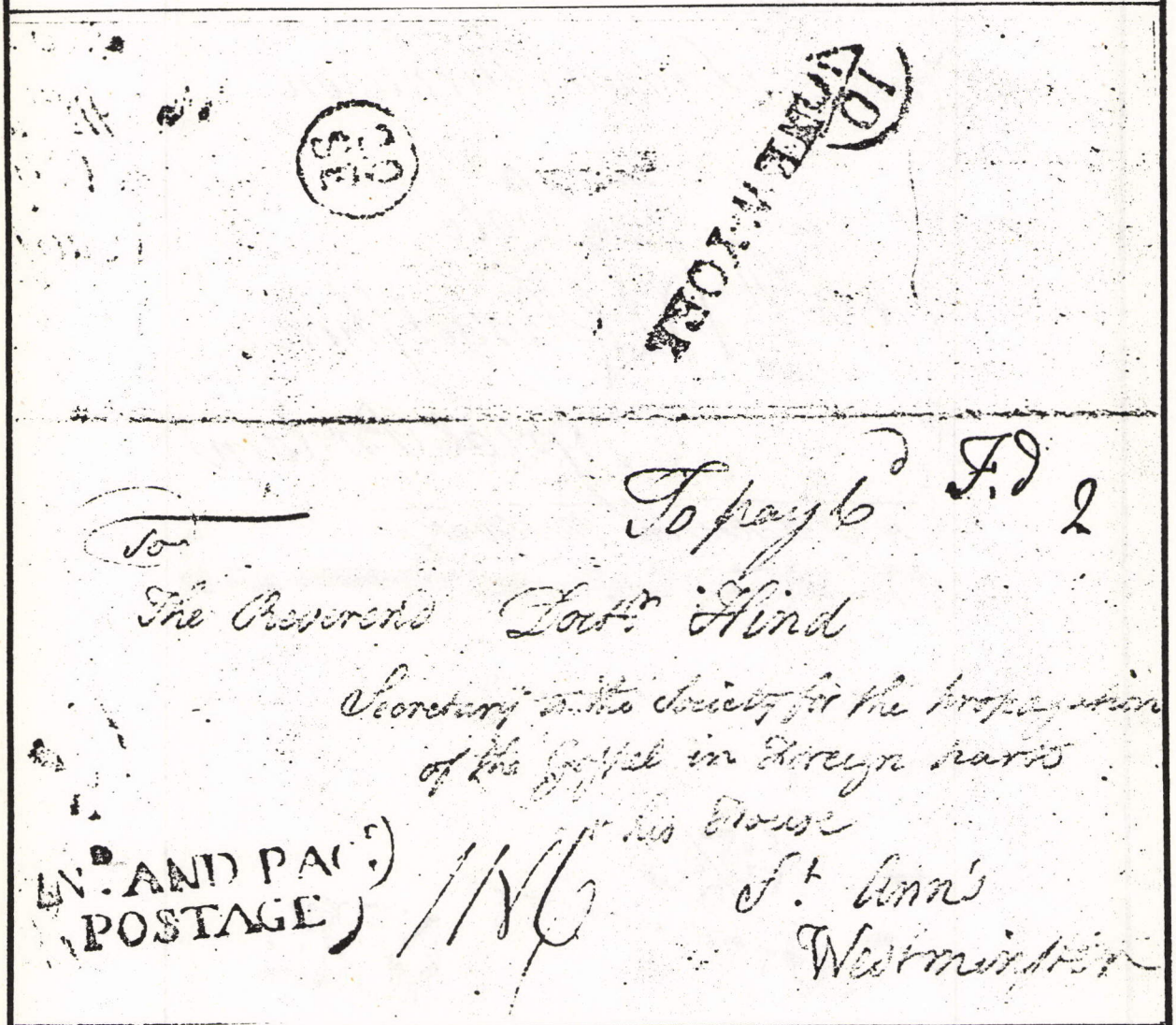


D-18. Bristol, Engl., April 6, 1767, Bishop mark 8/AP, via NEW/YORK, 24 x 12, brown, Bishop mark 28/MA, all on reverse, to Philadelphia. P(aid) 1N4. POST/PAID in circle. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

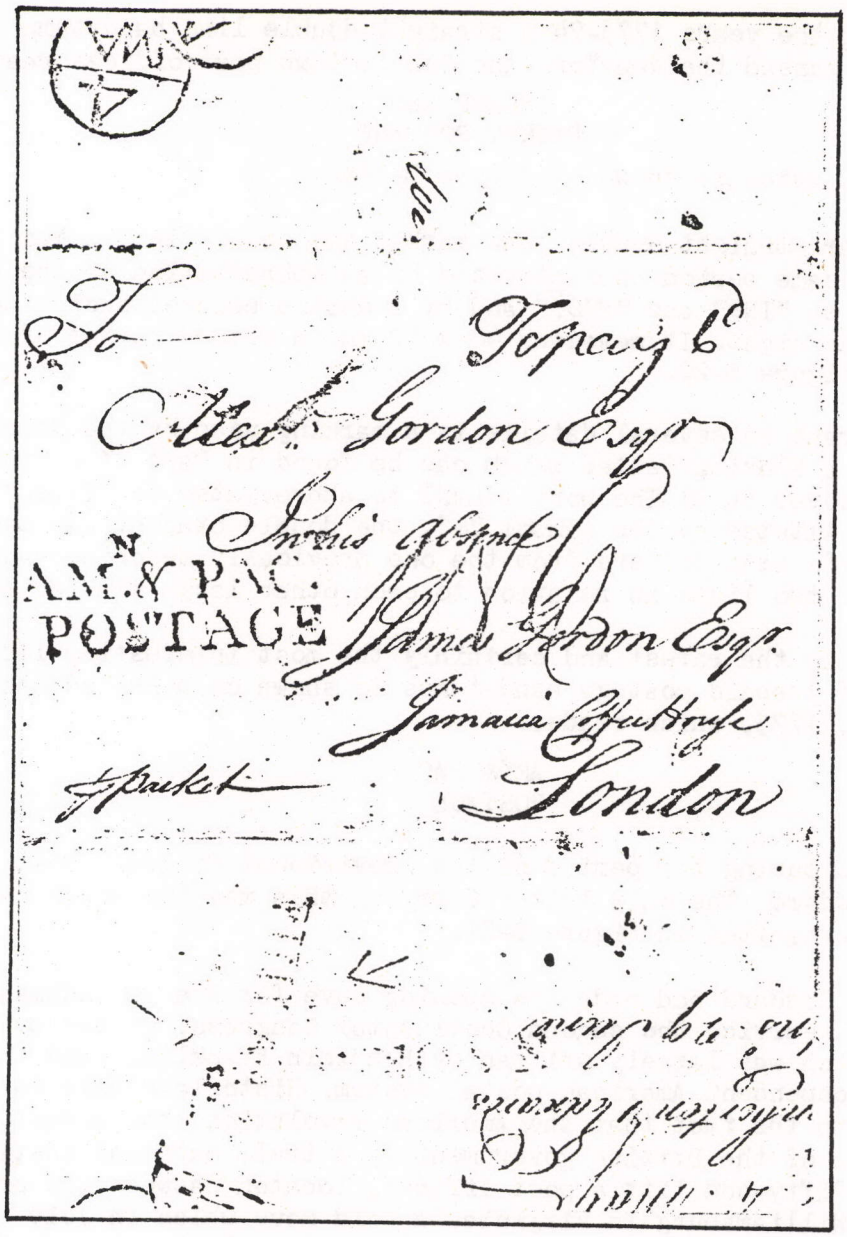

14 NR
Fred'g postage paid
20. dwts
To
To pay 4N
John Norton Esqr
Merchant
Via New-york
London
4 N
NEW YORK



D-19a. PHILA/DELPHIA, 53 x 16, red, on reverse, to Poole, Engl., Bishop mark 26/MR, via NEW/YORK, 25 x 13, black, all on reverse. INLAND AND/PACKETPOSTAGE, packet rate 3N, British inland rate 4d. Inall 3N4. January 26, 1773. (Robson Lowe Auction).



D-20. F(airfiel)d, September 5, 1774, via NEW_YORK, black 40 x 5, (provisional American Post Office), Bishop mark 20/SE(PTEMBER), to St. Anne's, Westminster, England. London Bishop mark 10/NO(VEMBER). Rated 2 dwts, local currency 6d. IN^{D} AND PAC^{T}/POSTAGE, bracketed, prepaid 1N6. (Faulstich-Siegel Auction).



D-21. PHILA(DELPHIA), 21 x 4½, red, AP(RIL):5, 1775, via N(EW) YORK, 27 x 4½, red, to London, Bishop mark 4/MA, black, all on reverse. To pay 6d.

AM.N & PAC.T/POSTAGE, 11½ x 40, black.
Total rate 1N6. (Faulstich-Siegel Auction).

February 22, 1770. It probably was applied in New York's post office. The only other letter carrying the same marking found so far was also processed in New York.

During the years 1773-74 a straight double line handstamp marked letters which passed the New York and Charlestown post offices reading:

INLAND AND
PACKET POSTAGE

a sample of which is shown in figure D-19a.

Another straight double line marker was in use in the New York office during the same period characterized by an abbreviation of the words INLAND and PACKET to "IN^{D}." and "PAC^{T}." and by a double bracket enclosing the two lines on the right. It measured 48 x 12 mm. A clear imprint of it is depicted in figure D-20.

Different in several details is a marking used by the Charlestown office in 1774 on a Florida letter which can be found in Part II of this book and listed as cover FL 3. The word INLAND is abbreviated to "INLD.", the word AND is substituted by the symbol "&", the double bracket has been omitted, the marking's size differs from the one previously described and the placing of the two lines in relation to each other lacks similarity.

Probably the rarest and certainly the most interesting imprint in this category of prepaid postage handstamps is shown on a Philadelphia cover of April 4, 1775, which reads:

AM.^{N}& PAC.^{T}
POSTAGE

It was used during the period of the provisional Congress Post, organized by William Goddard. The only letter Carrying this marking which has been found so far is exhibited in Figure D-21.

After Goddard had made the opening move for the abolishment of the British postal service the second Continental Congress, guided by a committee report, which was largely written by Benjamin Franklin, laid the groundwork for the independent American postal system. Historians have rarely paid attention to the fact that the American revolution, the actual substitution of a branch of the British government by a truly national institution, started in the fifty-odd little post offices, located between the province of Maine and Williamsburg in Virginia, a bold move which in July 1775 was confirmed by a Congressional ordinance almost exactly one year prior to the Declaration of Independance.

Unfortunately when it came to establishing a set of postage rates an error was made which had to be corrected five weeks later. In an effort to offer the American people a better deal than the British had done the generosity of the Congress had gone too far. An overall reduction of the rates by twenty percent from those in effect when the British were in command of the post office, appeared to endanger the postal budget. The profits of the operation would fall short of the expense created by it. Consequently on September 30, 1775, the old rate schedule as had been established by an act

of Parliament was adopted, this time, however, termed in pennyweights and grains of silver. Printed "Tables of the Port of all Single Letters carried by Post in the Northern District of North America As Established by Congress" in 1775, signed by Benjamin Franklin, in the same form and size as issued for the purpose of being hung in the American post offices can be found affixed to this book's back cover.

Between that date, September 30, 1775, and June 1, 1792, when the act of February 20 of that year became effective, the rate system as such did not change, though the actual rate figures varied greatly. During the war years the country's economic situation deteriorated to an alarming extent, inflation was rampant, and the Continental paper money depreciated progressively. Consequently the post office department was vexed by the recurring and again recurring need for adjustment of its postage rates.

On October 17, 1777, the Congress increased the rates of 1775 by 50 percent, on April 16, 1779, those new rates were doubled. Only eight months later, on December 28, the 1775 rates were multiplied by 20, and finally, on May 5th of the next year the latter ones were doubled. That was the highest rate ever charged to single letters in pre-statehood years. They remained in effect until December 1780, when they temporarily were decreased to 50% of the 1775 level, to be adjusted gradually to those basic rates of October 20, 1787, a measure which became effective April 5, 1788. Naturally one has to take into account that throughout these years monetary values changed proportionally until in the last quarter of 1782 the Spanish silver dollar was adopted as the monetary standard of the United States.

The fluctuations of the postage rates against the basic ones of September 1775 are graphically shown by the diagram of figure D-22.

Letters mailed during this highly unstable period are rather hard to find, and those that have been discovered carry rate figures which in many cases are equally hard to interpret. Postmasters who had the task of rating the mail in those days were often faced by nerve-racking problems. A number of such covers have been selected as illustrative material showing these fluctuating postage rates (figures D-23 through D-27).

An interesting detail of the early postal system deals with the "Franking Privilege", the favor of being exempt from paying postage.. Generally speaking it applied to all official correspondence. Edward Stern devoted a book to this subject (d-6), but the substance of it covers years far beyond the pre-statehood period. However, there were many exceptions to this general rule. For instance when Francis Lovelace, the Governor of New York wrote his famous letter of December 1672, addressed to his colleague in Connecticut (d-7) he penned an endorsement on the address side, which read "Post Payd". There can be no doubt that this was a "public letter". Yet it was paid for. Though the exemption of public letters was not spelled out in so many words in any ordinance of those days, except probably in England, the right of a public official to send letters free of charge was not claimed by Lovelace at this occasion. The existing literature does not explain this fact. It may be assumed that the man who carried this letter incorporated in his person the entire postal system of the New York colony, postrider and postmaster at

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(d-6) Edward Stern: History of the "Free Franking" of Mail in the United States. (New York, 1936).

(d-7) See figure B-4.

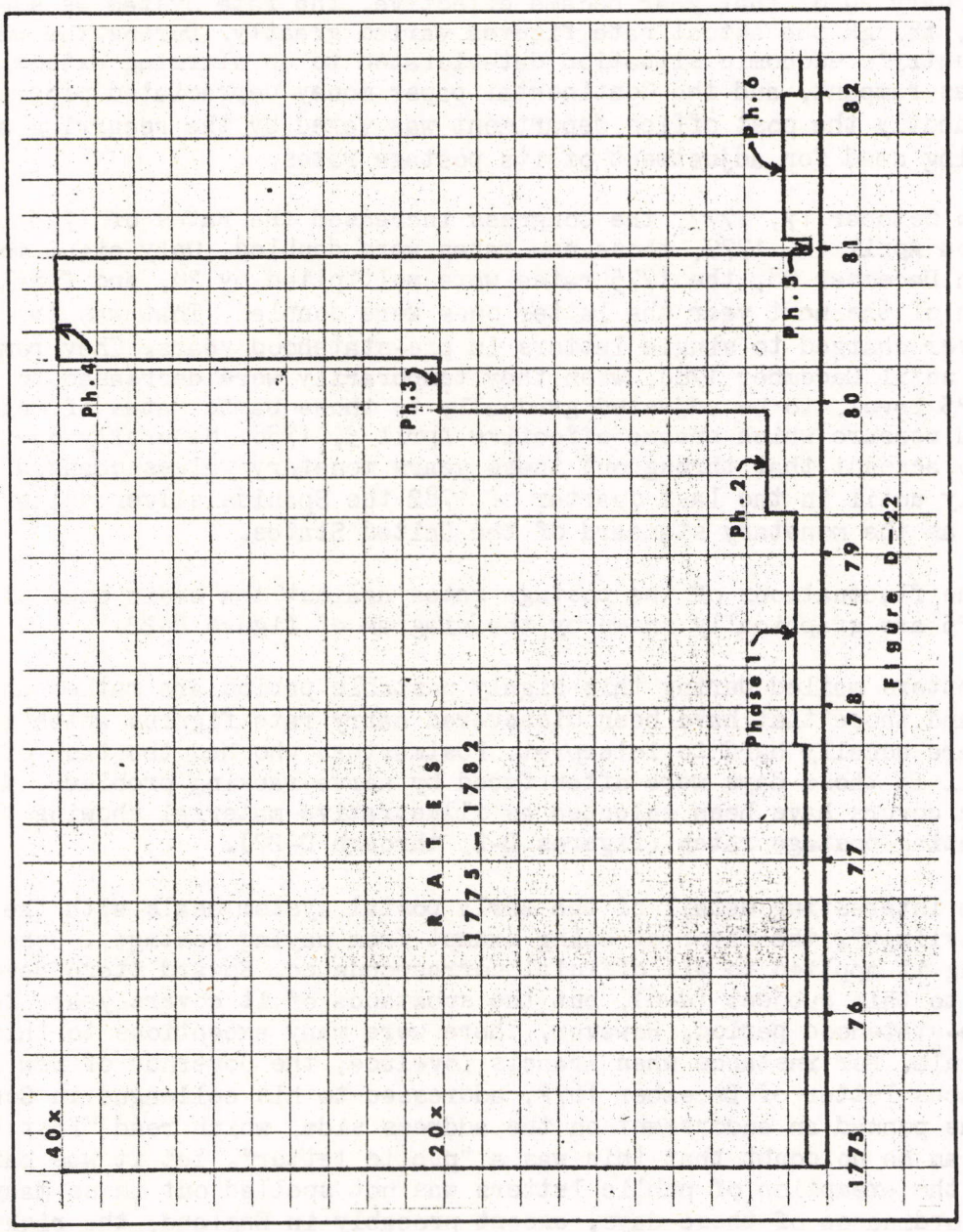
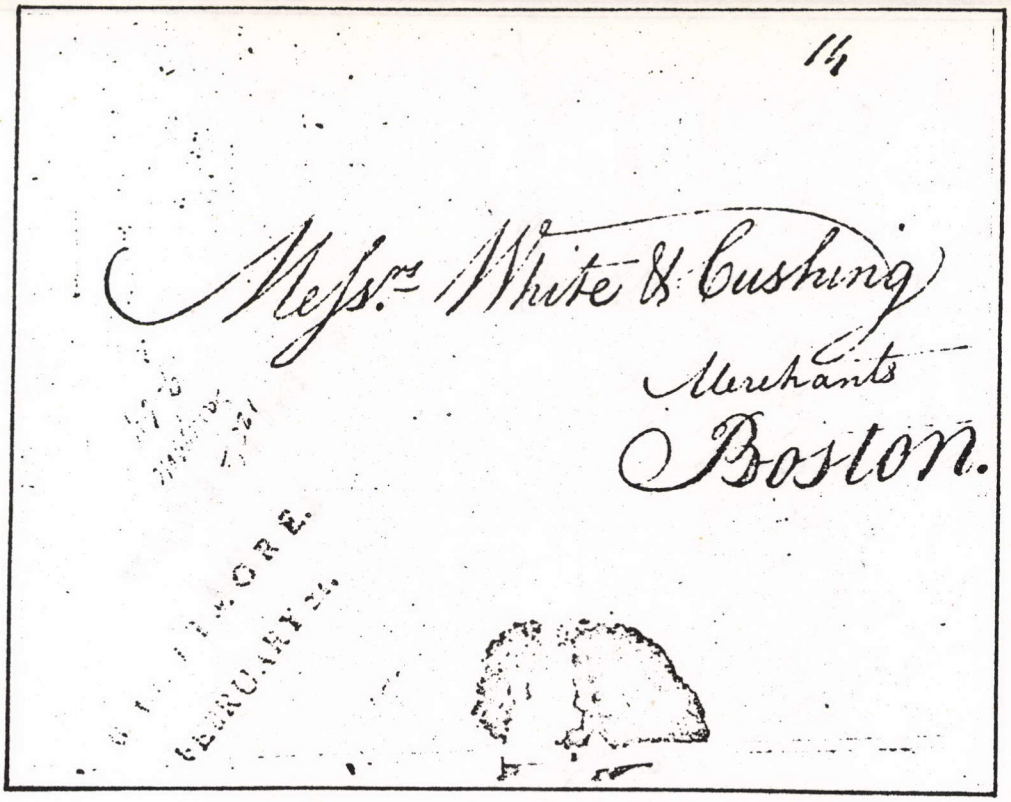
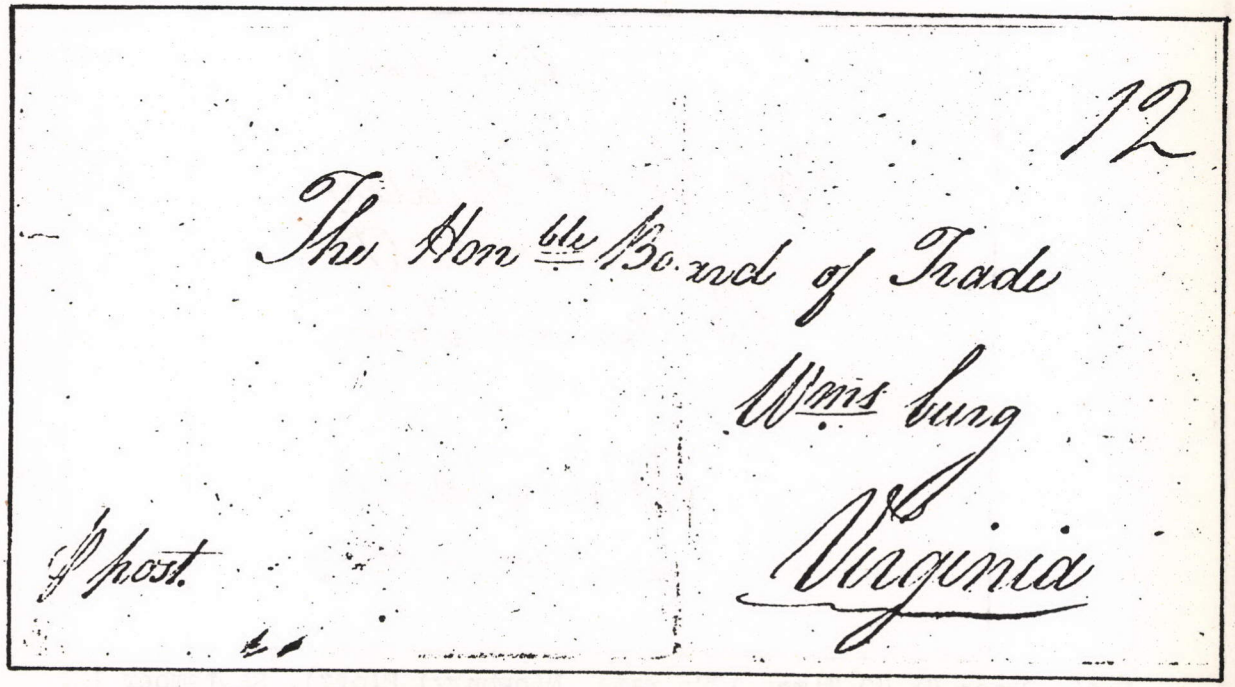

40x
20x
RATES
1775 — 1782
Ph.4
Ph.3
Ph.2
Phase 1
Ph.5
Ph.6
1775
76
77
78
79
80
81
82

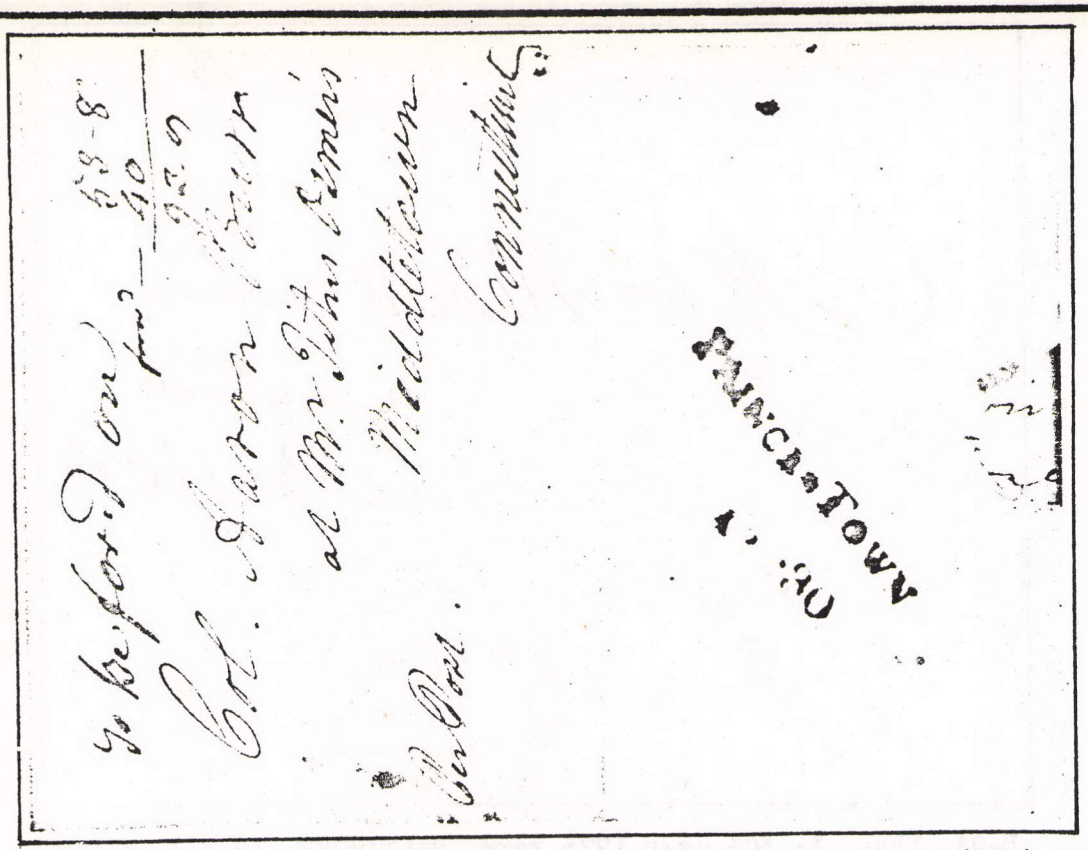
Figure D—22



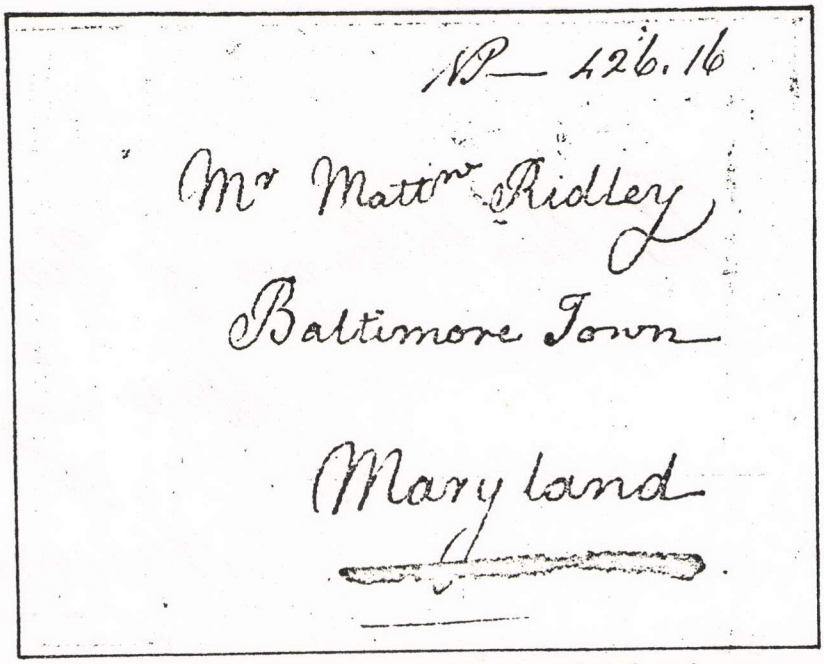
D-23. Phase 1: 50% over 1775 rate. BALTIMORE, 39 x 3, black, FEBRUARY 21, 1778, to Boston, double letter. 1775 rate 4 dwts. 16 gr. + 50% = 7 dwts, double = 14 dwts.



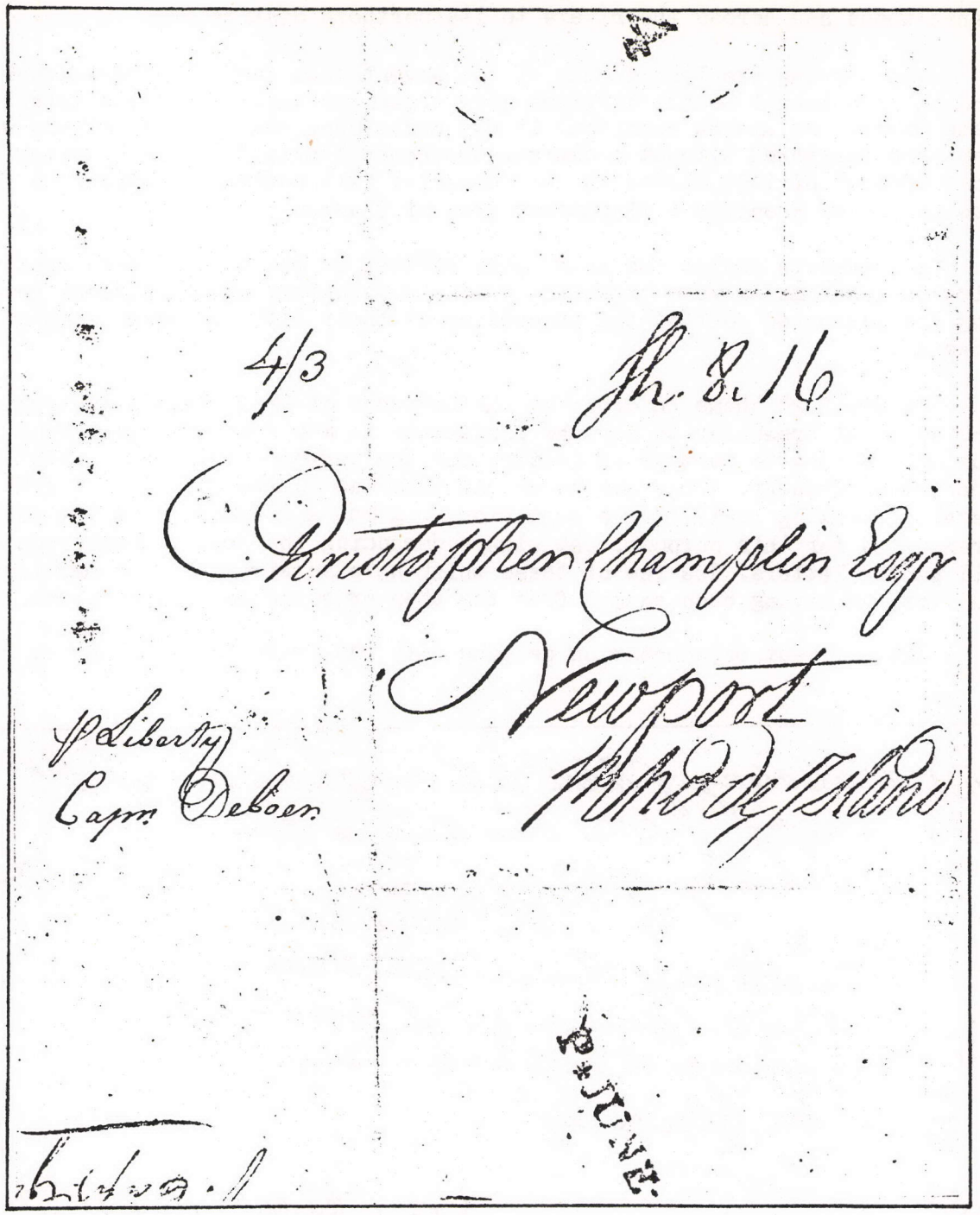
D-24. Phase 2: 3 Times 1775 rate. Philadelphia, August 24, 1779, Williamsburg, 1775 rate 4 dwts. Triple that = 12 dwts, (Huntington Library, San Marino. HM 5051).



D-25. Phase 3. 20 Times 1775 rate. PRINCE*TOWN, 43 x 4, AP(RIL) 30, 1780, to Middletown, via Hartford. 1775 rate 2 dwts. 16 gr. 20 x = 53 dwts. 8 gr. (American Antiquarian Society).



D-26. Phase 4: 40 Times 1775 rate. N(ewbury) P(ort), September 12, 1780, to Baltimore, double letter. 1775 rate 5 dwts, 8 gr. 40 times = 213 dwts. 8 gr. Double 426 dwts. 16 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



D-27. Phase 6: 2 Times 1775 rate. P(HILADELPHIA)*JUNE 4, 1781, to Newport, Ship letter 16 gr. 1775 rate 4 dwts. 2 times = 8 dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

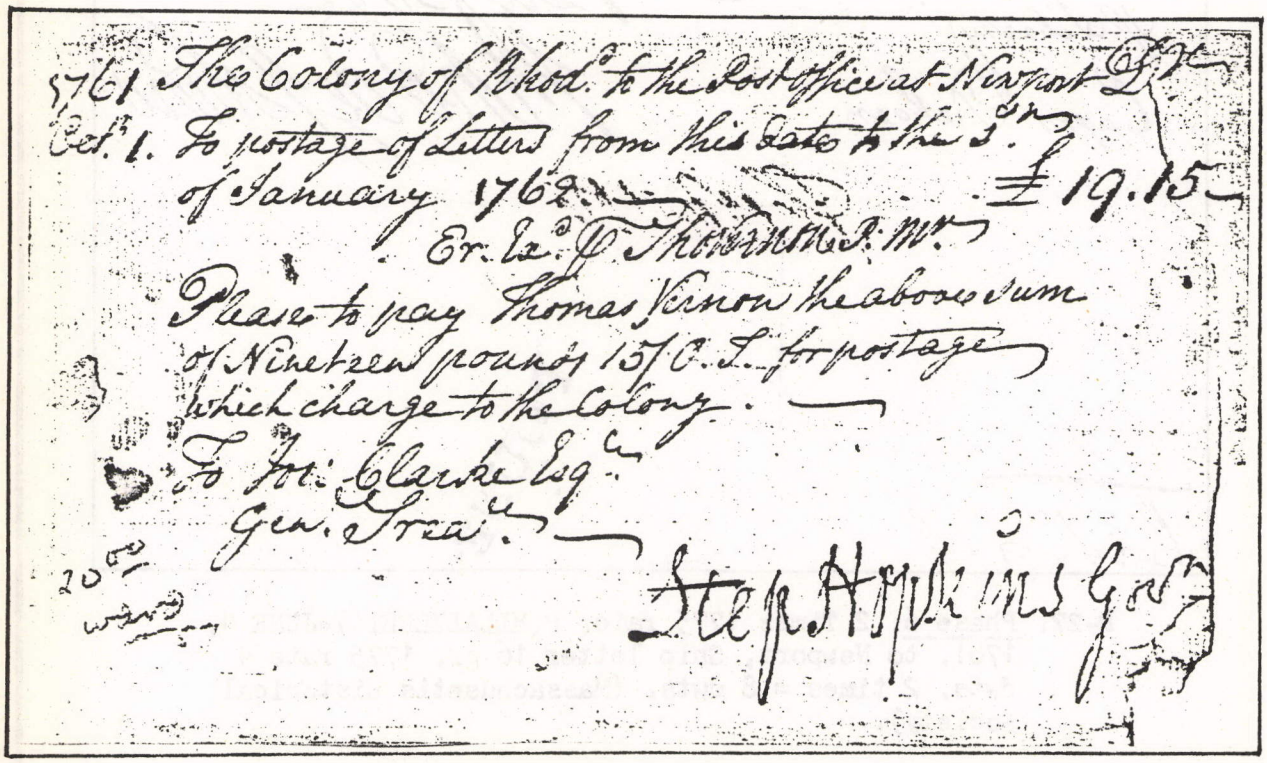
the same time. The payment mentioned probably represented a prepaid compensation for the man's service of carrying this small batch of mail through the dense woods and across the rivers to its northern destination.

When during the last decade of the seventeenth century inter-colonial and intra-colonial postal services were organized under the Neale patent (see Chapter on Andrew Hamilton) it was understood that public letters were sent and delivered without a charge. The Pennsylvania "Law for Erecting a Post Office" of 1693 stated it very clearly: "All Letters belonging to the publick to be Received & Dispatched free of Charges ..."

In order to assist the local post offices in making both ends meet the diverse governments were expected to make a voluntary annual payment covering the estimated cost of the processing of their letters, which some of them did.

Figure D-28 shows an order by the Governor of Rhode Island instructing the colonial treasurer to pay the postmaster in New Port, Thomas Vernon, the sum of £19.15.- to postage of letters for the period of October 1, 1761 to the 3rd of January, 1762, and to charge this sum to the colony. But generally speaking legislatures were slow to grant allowances from the public treasuries for this purpose, yet always demanding the free transmission of all public letters. The few of these which have survived show no markings in any form of having been exempt from the then existing rate regulations.

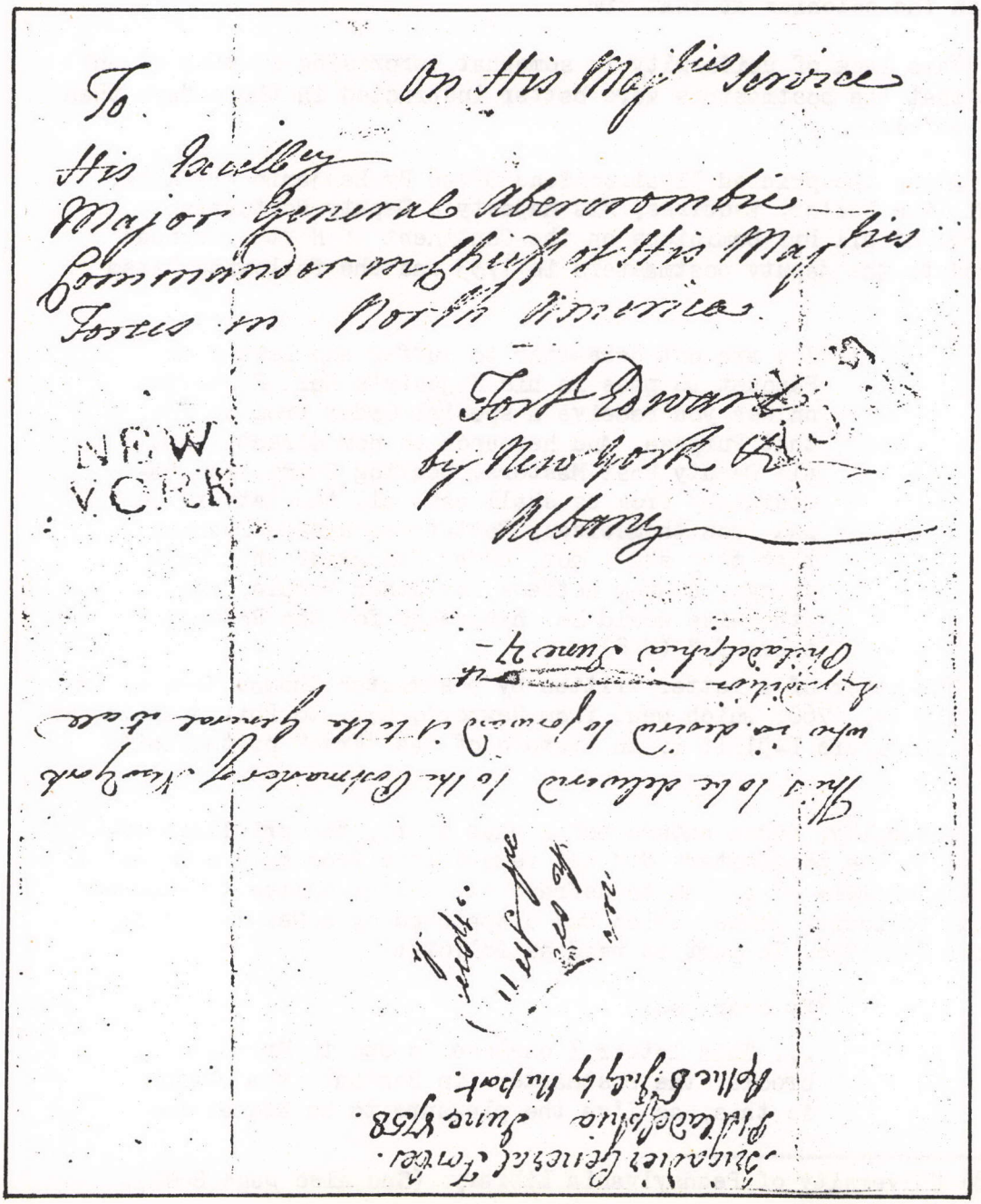
The earliest documentation dealing with the franking privilege is re-


1761 The Colony of Rhod.d to the Post Office at Newport Dr.
Oct.r 1. To postage of Letters from this date to the 3.rd
of January 1762 £19.15
Er. Ex.d P. Thos Vernon P. Mr.
Please to pay Thomas Vernon the above sum
of Nineteen pounds 15/ O. S. for postage
which charge to the Colony.
To Jos. Clarke Esq.r
Gen. Treas.r
Step Hopkins Gov.r

D-28. Order, dd. October 1, 1761, by Governor Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island to the treasurer to pay £19.15.- to the postmaster of Newport, Thomas Vernon, for postage. (Rhose Island State Archives).

ported to be a letter by Governor Hunter of New York in 1709, but very little such evidence has been found which is dated immediately following the passing of Queen Anne's postal law of 1711. Not have letters been seen of that nature. However, there is no doubt that military officials could send their correspondence free of charge, though this was not always true during the pre-revolutionary years. Many letters written during the French and Indian war by military commanders were either franked or not.

Figure D-29 represents the cover of a letter addressed to the commander of the British forces at Fort Edward on the Hudson River, which carries the subscription "On His Majesties Service", yet shows no postal charge.



D-29. Philadelphia, June 27, 1758, to Fort Edward, July 6, via NEW/YORK, 24 x 12, black, from Brigadier General Forbes to Major General Abercrombie. No postal charge. (Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 356).

It was dated June 27, 1758, and is one of the oldest franked letters that have survived. An earlier letter which went free of charge to Colonel George Washington is of a special nature and is described in the Chapter on an "Army Post Office Letter" in this series.

During the fifties of the 18th century some official correspondence, though equally marked "On His Majesty's Service", was subject to the payment of postage, as is evidenced by figure D-30. It depicts a letter from Boston to the Governor of Rhode Island, dated May 19, 1755. Apparently there was no uniformity on this matter in the colonies at that time.

This lack of uniformity is somewhat surprising in view of the fact that the postmasters were better instructed in those days than ever before.

Among the printed "Instructions Given By Benjamin Franklin, andWilliam Hunter, Esquires, His Majesty's Deputy Postmasters General of all his Dominions on the Continent of North America" issued to the deputy postmasters in 1753 was the following "Item 17":

> "You are not hereafter to suffer any Letter or Pacquet to pass in his Majesty's Mail Post-free, unless you receive a special Order from us for that Purpose. And hereupon we now direct, that all Deputy Post-Masters, bearing Commission immediately from us shall have all the Letters to and from themselves, Post-free; always meaning that they shall not, under Colour of this Privilege, convey Letters for other People, who otherwise would be chargeable for the Postage thereof." (d-8)

The cover of a letter written by postmaster Thomas Vernon, dated July 14, 1760, which went from Newport, R.I. to Philadelphia, is shown in figure D-31.It is an example of the "Free" postmaster's mail.

Naturally, human nature being what it is, the privilage extended to the postmasters did not remain free from malpractices. A glaring example of a plan to defraud the postal system is exposed in the following letter which was dispatched by a New Yorker on August 20, 1758. In part it read as follows:

> "My dear Ned:
>
> ... This letter I enclose is one to Mr. Holbrooke, the Postmaster (in Boston), the reason is this, as I've the pleasure to be acquainted

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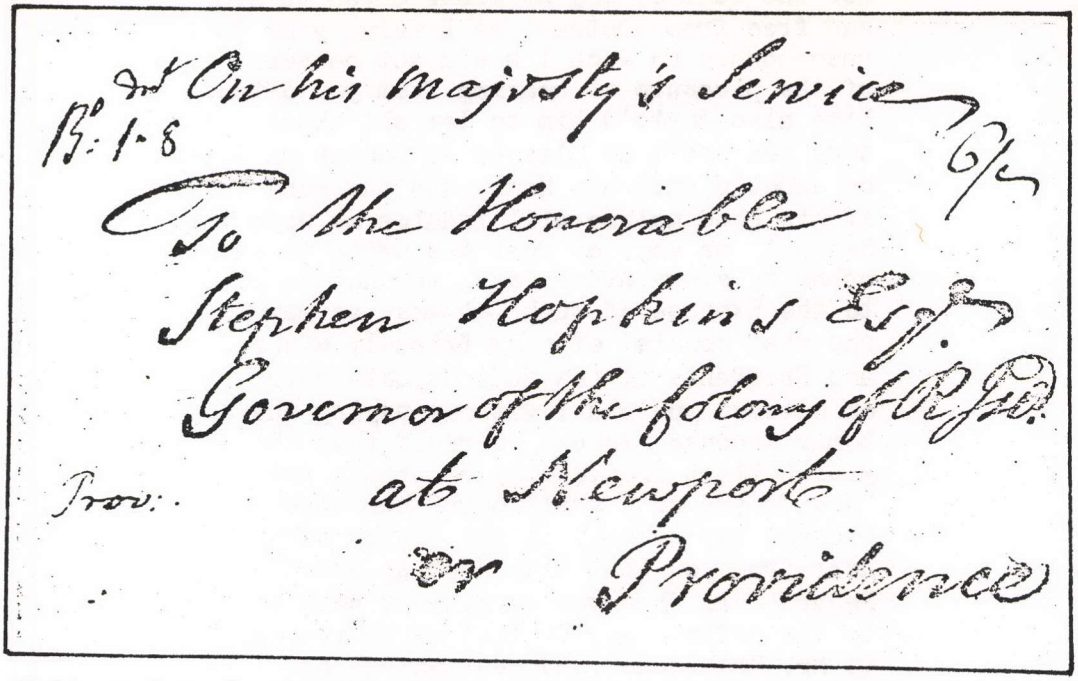
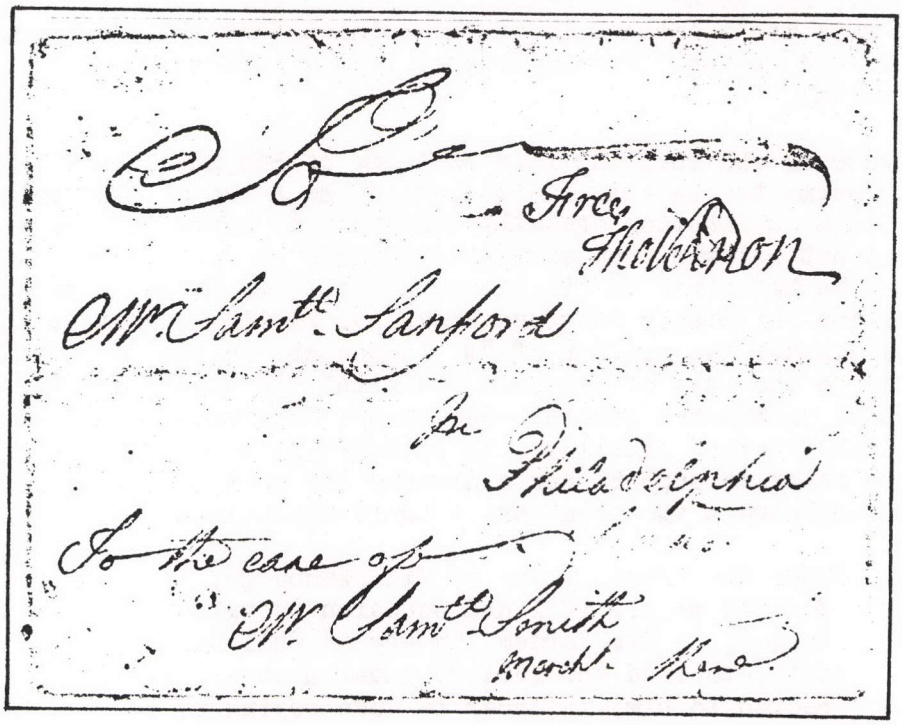
(d-8) University of Pennsylvania Library. (See also page B-46).



D-30. Bo(ston), May 19, 1755, to the Governor of Rhode Island. On His Majesty's Service. Rate 1 dwt. 8 gr. Local currency 6/2. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



D-31. Newport, R.I., July 14, 1760, to Philadelphia. Free, Tho.Vernon. (Postmaster).

> with him have taken the Liberty to request him, that what Letters I send you p. Post, for the future, may be under Cover to him, and free from Postage, as I value your Correspondence so much I wou'd not be derived of the pleasure of hearing from you often. I've also desir'd him to let all those Letters you shall be pleased to honour me with, be endow'd with his Name, and the word FREE, if his good nature will indulge me with this Request, we may, my dear Ned write to each other by every other Post, and not be put to the Expense of such Letters, as may now and then consist of only friendly wishes, and Fragments of new made Reports carrying on between you and I without paying the customar Expense. Assure yourself that tho' your Letters shou;d only contain a friendly "how do you do', shall never begrudge the Expense nay even if it was how so much, to hear from you that I've such an unfeigned Regard for. When you carry your next Letter to the Office, you'll find on delivering it to Mr. Holbrooke (and mentioning that I've wrote him) the good or bad Success of this Scheme."

There is no evidence of success or failure of this fraudulous plot. However, Mr. Herbert Bernstein who kindly gave permission to quote from this man's letter, is of the opinion that the increased frequency of the relevant correspondence is and indication that the Sceme worked.

Many readers who feel inclined to think of Benjamin Franklin, the Deputy Postmaster General of the period, as a man of high principles, will be somewhatunpleasantly surprised to learn that he himself, did not refrain from similar practices in spite of the instructions he had given to his subordinates. Mrs.Helen K. Zirkle in the American Philatelic Congress Book, no. 24 (1958) wrote a short article under the caption of "A Commentery on the Operation of the Posts in the Days of Benjamin Franklin", in which she exposed the artful postmaster general. She wrote: "Having arranged for himself a free franking privilege, he extended it to the use of his friends." In order to support her statement she quoted from letters exchanged between two prominent botanic scientists:

> "When Mr. Franklin was at Williamsburgh, he desired me ... if I had occasion to write to you, or Dr. Garden, by way of Philadelphia, to send the letters under a cover directed to him, in order to save paying postage."

This piece of mail was dated February 23, 1761.

The somewhat incriminating statement at the address of the Deputy Postmaster General appears in a different light when one considers the postal burden on the small number of those who carried on a voluminous correspondence, due to their particular profession or vocation, such as scientists and scholars. Postage rates were very high and in many cases made it almost impossible for this class of letter writers to pursue their work. Contact with colleagues, both local and overseas, was essential to the success of their endeavors. Cadwallader Colden, a renowned New York botanist, who corresponded extensively with men of learning in Europe, complained:

> "What I send or receive is commonly trusted to Masters of Vessels & I often meet with Disappointments by their carelessness ... My correspondence cannot bear the charge of Postage so that the office loses nothing for it cannot be carried on under such an expense."

George Shelvock, who was Secretary to the Postmasters General in London, granted Colden the privilege of free postage, by making it possible for him to send and receive his letters and packages through the packet agent in Falmouth (d-9). It may very well be that Franklin felt inclined to grant the same kind of a privilege to the two botanists Mrs. Zirkle was referring to. In the same article she stated that many letter writers made it a sport to circumvent the use of the posts, and that if circumstances prevented them from dispatching their messages otherwise they appologized to their correspondents for causing them to pay postage.

It may be that these conditions which prevailed in postal America of the mid-century years made Whitehall decide to drastically change the provisions regarding the franking privilege. The time was ripe for a new approach, when the end of the war with France and the resulting addition of Canada and the Floridas to British American territory made it necessary to amend the existing postal law anyhow.

The announcement of figure D-32, issued by the Secretary to the Deputy Postmasters General in New York, James Parker, on September 6, 1768, made it clear that postmasters lost the privilege of franking their letters together with a number of other public officials when the postal law of 1765 became effective. But Franklin was among those who remained untouched by the measure.

(d-9) Ruth L. Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), pp. 59-60. Also the footnote in p. 103.

SIR, *General Post-Office, New-York,*
September 6. 1768.

ALTHO' you cannot be ignorant, that the Privilege of Franking of Letters in *America*, is, by Act of Parliament, taken away from all Persons, except some particular Officers enumerated in the Law; it has nevertheless appeared, that some Post-Masters have still presumed to frank their Letters: I am therefore commanded, once more to give you this Notice, hereby enjoining you, not only not to frank any Letter yourself, but to suffer no Letter franked to pass through your Office, without properly noticing it to me, except such as are franked by the D. Post-master General or their Secretary, or by the proper Officers described in the said Act of Parliament, as you will answer it at the Peril of your Office. And forasmuch as Complaints are frequently made, of the Irregularity of the Riders in performing their several Stages; the D. Post-master General have further commanded me, to write you, desiring you will send without Delay, the Day and Hour that every Rider should set out from or come to your Office: And if you pay any of them, you are to let me know, what is the Yearly Pay of every such Rider, and the Course and Distance of the Stages they ride; as also what may be the greatest Obstacles in their Journies, which at any Time may occasion their Let or Hindrance, that if there be any Possibility of a Remedy, such Measures may be taken as are most conducive thereto; The D. Post-master General being determined to put every Matter relating to the Office, under the best Regulation possible, to answer the End for which it was instituted.

By Order of the D. Post-master General,

James Parker
Secr.

On his Majesty's Service

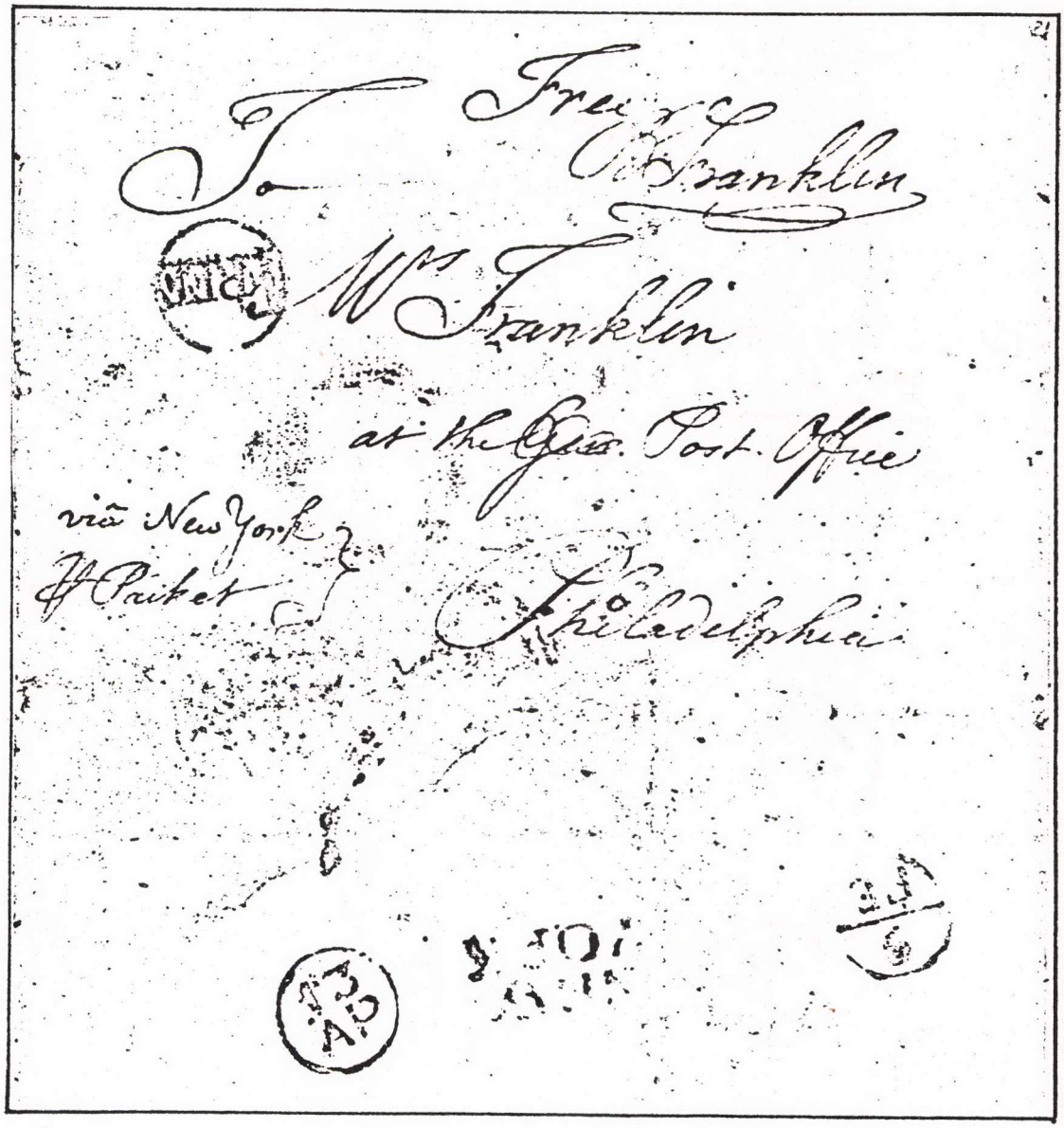
For Thomas Vernon, Esq.

Post Master

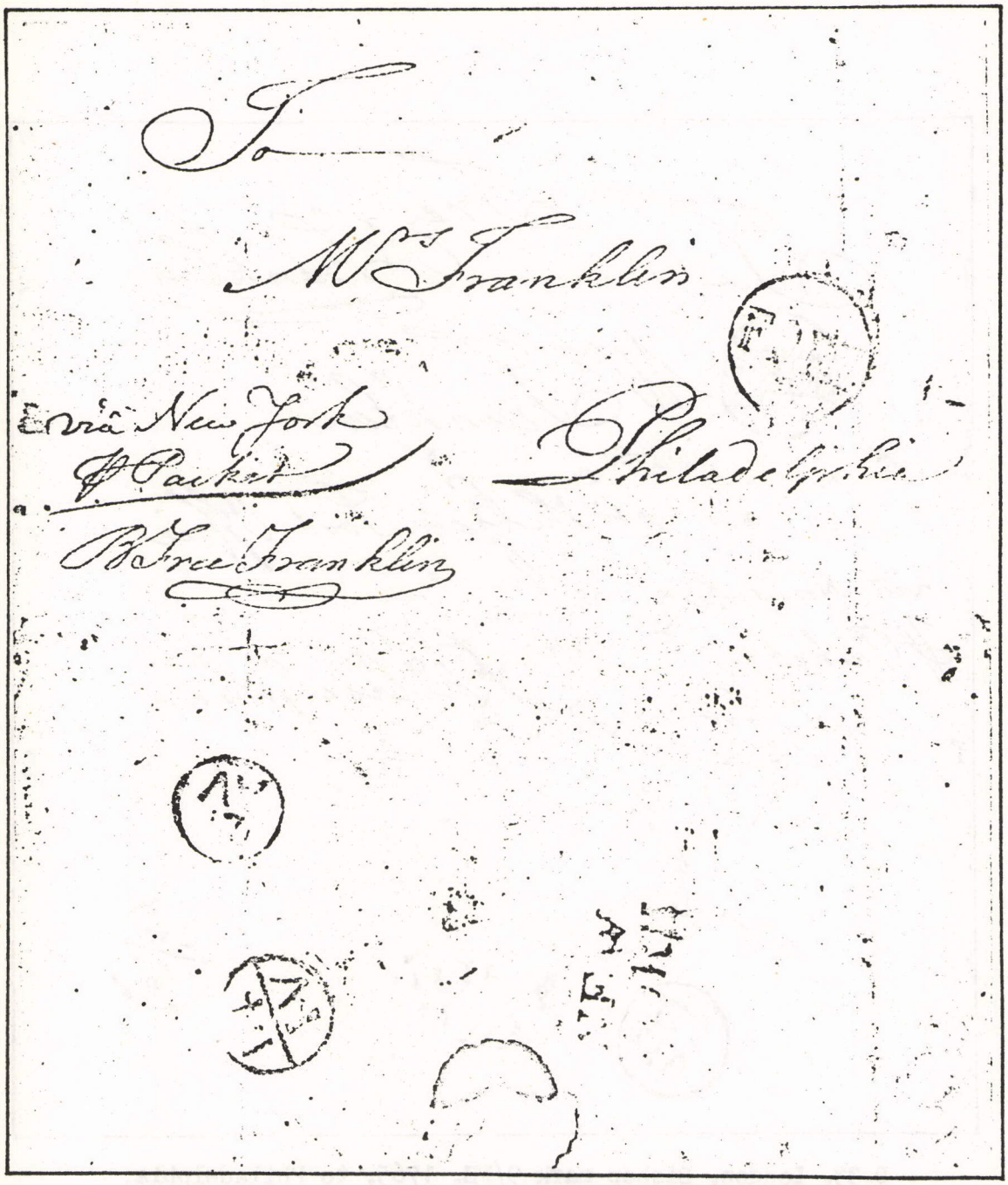
Rh: Island

Jno. Parker

D-32. Broadside of September 6, 1768, and its cover, issued and mailed by James Parker, secretary to the Deputy Postmasters General, reminding postmasters of their loss of the franking privilege, according to the Act of 1764, effective October 10, 1765. (Rhode Island State Archives and Don Knee).



D-33. London, Bishop mark 9/FE, 1765, to Philadelphia, via NEW/YORK, 24 x 12, black, Bishop mark 13/AP, all on reverse. Free B.Franklin, FREE in circle. (American Philosophical Society).



D-34. London, Bishop mark 14/IV, 1766, to Philadelphia, via NEW/YORK, 24 x 12, black, Bishop mark 21/AV, all on reverse. B.Free Franklin. FREE in circle. (American Philosophical Society).

Numerous letters carrying the "Free B. Franklin" endorsement have been preserved (figure D-33). At times the humorous Philadelphian use a minor diversion of the franking subscription. It became "B.Free Franklin". Some historians have referred to it as a sarcastic expression of disdain in connection with the accusations of treason made against him in 1773, which led to his dismissal. However, since the letter of figure D-34, which carries this humoristic postal sleight of hand, was dated June 13, 1766, long before the insinuations were made, it probably can better be interpreted as showing a premonition of things to come.

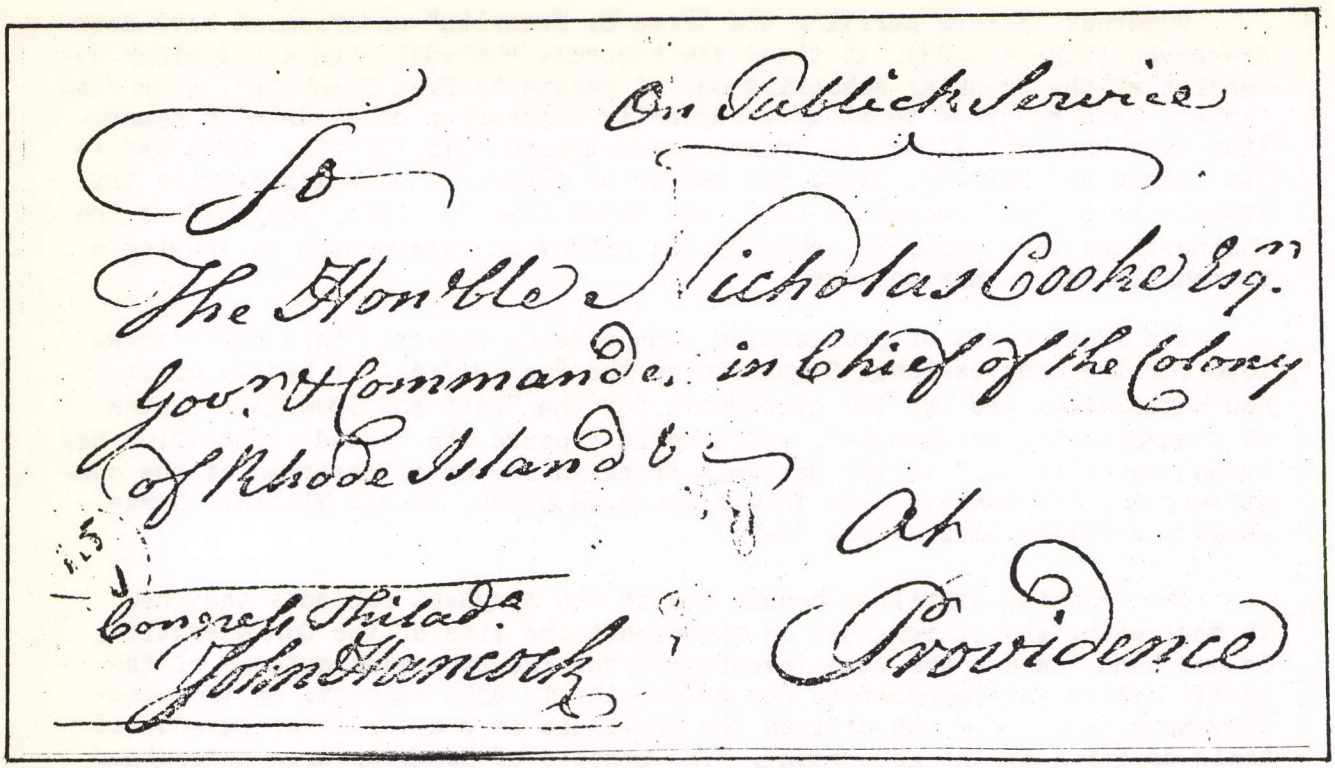
The great event of proclaiming independence resulted in a heavy workload for the Congressional Committee on the Post Office. It had to draft new legislation and lay the groundwork for the "best and Speediest system of communication obtainable", which would "insure the needed cooperation between the colonies." (d-10) Benjamin Franklin served as chairman of the committee, and its members were Thomas Lynch, R.H.Lee, Thomas Willing, Samuel Adams and Philip Livingston. (d-11)

The franking privilege became one of the toughest subjects they had to deal with, and it remained so throughout the life of the Confederation. On one hand the men who were responsible for the financial outcome of the postal system were opposed to any generosity in this respect. On the other they were also those who claimed the privilege as a natural consequence of their position in the government. "The members of Congress were determined to enjoy all the privileges of officials under the old office." (d-12) On November 8, 1775 Congress resolved "That all letters to and from the delegates of the United Colonies, during the session of Congress, pass and be carried free of postage, the members having engaged upon their honour not to frank or enclose any letters but their own."

When serious preparations had to be made for the defense of the country's new-found freedom the military sounded its voice, and as soon as hostilities broke out the generals were joined by their subordinates until the soldier in actual service wished to beheard too. On January 9, 1777 all these claims for the franking privilege were granted by the Congress, including those coming from the army privates, provided their letters were franked by an officer in charge. It is no wonder that John Adams in reply to a complaint by Thomas Jefferson about the operation of the Post Office wrote: "... the expense is very high and the profits, so dear is everything, and so little correspondence is carried on except in franked letters, will not support the Office." (d-12)

Of the many letters processed by the post office during the war under the provisions of the franking privilege official ones are the most numerous that have survived. Many of these wound up in government files, whereas private letters had a slim chance of being preserved. Two samples of franked colonial mail are exhibited in figures D-35 and PA 16 (Part II). The Hancock letter was written June 14, 1776, when the Congress had just started debating the draft of the Constitution by John Dickinson. The second letter was marked "Free" by Robert Morris, like Hancock a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who served his country for several years at the head of the Treasury.

(d-10) Wesley E. Rich: The History of the U.S. Post Office (1924), p. 48.
(d-11) Ruth L.Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), p. 162.
(d-12) C.F.Adams, ed.: Works of John Adams. Vol. IX, p. 467.



D-35. Philadelphia, Bishop mark 15/IV, 1776, to Providence, R.I. On Publick Service. Congress Philada. (W.L.Clements Library, Ann Arbor).

When the end of the struggle for freedom was in sight the postal law needed a thorough review and so did the free franking provisions. On October 19, 1781, the Post Office Committee of the Congress recommended that "all franks be abolished". The country's finances could not continue the luxury of the generous postage exemptions. But this recommendation was not accepted by the Legislature. A once extended privilege appeared hard to repeal without creating bad feelings. The cooperation of a reliable governmental staff could easily endangered, particularly under the trying circumstances of a transfer from war-time to a peace-time administration. The result of it all was a still formidable list of persons whose correspondence was of a public nature.

The Ordinance of October 18, 1782, read:

> "And be it further ordained by the authority aforesaid, that letters, packets, and despatches to and from the members and secretary of Congress, while actually attending Congress, to and from the Commander in Chief of the armies of these United States, or commander of a separate army, to and from the heads of the departments of finance, of war and of foreign affairs, of these United States, on public service, shall pass and be carried free of postage.
>
> And be it further ordained that single letters, directed to and from army officers of the line, in actual service, shall be free of postage."

Even this long list was supplemented with a few more privileged persons on December 24, 1782.

After George Washington had resigned as commander in chief his non-private mail continued to arrive in volume. On April 28, 1784 it was decided to extend the franking privilege to him again and to authorize the postmaster general to refund to the General the postage paid by him since his resignation. (d-13)

When a postal historian looks at an old town map of Perth Amboy on New Jersey's Raritan River (d-14) his eye is struck by a familiar name: Dockwra, William Dockwra, who owned a sizable property there. One is reminded of the time when Andrew Hamilton became Thomas Neale's representative and postmaster general in America (d-15). Dockwra had an intimate knowledge of London's postal operations and he knew Hamilton to be an efficient American adminstrator. The combination of these facts resulted in a step which was going to be of fundamental importance to the future of the American Postal system.

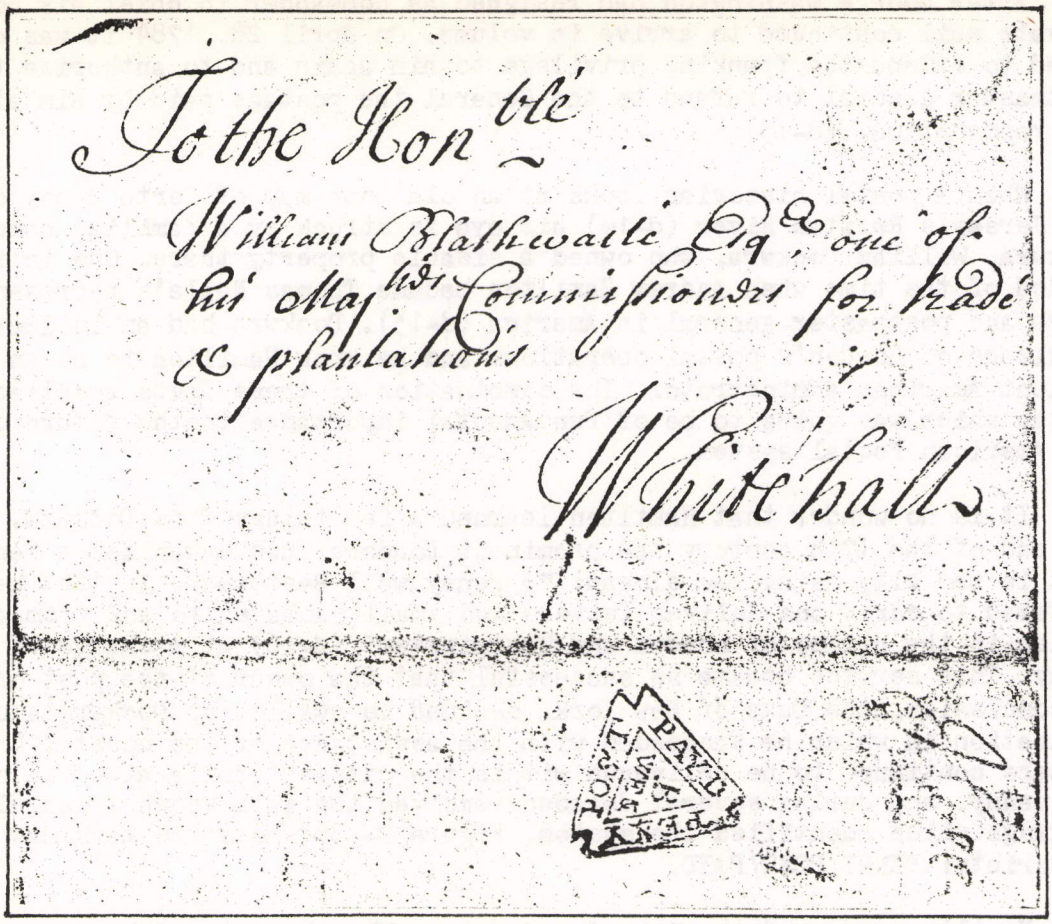
It is no wonder that Hamilton learned a few things from Dockwra. By the end of the 17th century the prominent Londoner had organized a Penny Post in the city using the slogan: "A Penny well Bestowed". In 1680 he "offered to carry and deliver letters and small packages to and from any parish in the cities of London and Westminster" (d-16) at a charge of one penny. This service became so successful that the owner of the post office concession, the Duke of New York, decided to swallow up Dockwra's organization in which he succeeded with the assistance of the courts. Local letters continued to be delivered within the cities' limits at a fee of one penny, and during several decades received the well known triangular markings which identified the system. Figure D- 36 shows the markings late variety: PENNY/POST/PAYD.

Hamilton endorsed the idea for America. When he noticed how poorly incoming letters were handled in taverns and coffee houses, how often pieces of mail failed to be picked up by the addressees or their friends, he realized what a benefit a penny-house-delivery post could be to the community, and what good publicity it could mean for the Neale system.

It must have been a surpise to Hamilton to discover that on June 11, 1689 Richard Wilkens, postmaster of Boston had received instructions from the General Court "to receive all letters and deliver them at 1d. each." (d-17) Boston had beaten him to it. The Penny Post had had its beginning in America a few years prior to its planned introduction by the "father of the American Post".

But outside Massachusetts the field lay open for the Penny Post. When in 1693, at the instigation of Hamilton, the General Post Office in Philadelphia was given a postal law it stated: "... if Packets of Letters Lye at the Office uncalled for the space of forty-eight hours, the Post Master then sending them forth to the respective houses of the persons to whom they are directed, one penny more for every such letter or packet." Similar decisions were made in a few other provinces, though it seems doubtful that the Penny Post found practical use outside the larger communities.

(d-13) Journals of the Continental Congress, Vol. XXVI, p. 314.
(d-14) William A. Whitehead: Early History of Perth Amboy (New York, 1856).
(d-15) See Chapter on Andrew Hamilton.
(d-16) F.George Kay: Royal Mail (London, 1915), pp 36-38.
(d-17) Massachusetts Provincial Acts, VI, p. 37.



D-36. New York, September 4, 1701, to White Hall, London. Penny Post triangular marking. (Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 151).

In 1711 when the Act of Queen Anne became the postal law for "All Her Majesties Dominions" the one Penny Post was confirmed in spite of the fact that the "Committee of the whole House, who were to consider farther of Ways and Means for raising the Supply granted Her Majesty", had resolved to increase the rate to "Three Half-Pence".

The existing literature dealing with the colonial postal services makes no mention of the Penny Post during the ensuing decades, until the ever alert postmaster general of the fifties picks up the subject again. Thomas Coulson in "Benjamin Franklin and the Post Office" wrote (d-18):

> "There was not yet any attempt at delivering letters directly to the persons to whom they were addressed. Letters were delivered to the Post Offices along the post roads and remained there until called for. While postmaster of Philadelphia, Franklin had developed a means of facilitating delivery within the city and its immediate surrounding area by publishing in his Gazette the na-

(d-18) The National Philatelic Museum (Philadelphia), Vol.III, No.1, pp. 30-31.

mes of those for whom letters were being held in the post office. This example was quickly adopted in Boston, so that friends and acquaintances in both cities assisted in the delivery of the mail. The issue of the Gazette for July 26, 1753 contained the announcement of the first city delivery.

> 'Whatever Letters, for Persons living in Town, remain uncall'd for, on these Days they are brought to the Post-Office, will the next Morning be sent out by a Penny Post, provided for that Purpose.'

While this was an innovation on the American scene, the practice had already been in operation in England, where it had been tried in London toward the end of the seventeenth century. It had proven to be such a boon that Franklin readily adopted it. He was soon employing three carriers to deliver his penny post."

Apparently the author of the above article was not familiar with the history and the legal background of the Penny Post. Franklin and Hunter's instructions to the Deputy Postmasters, which they issued in 1753, and in printed form, are the best source of information. They stated:

> "... you are to allow the Person employed by your to deliver Letters aforesaid, to receive of the Persons to whom he delivers them, for his own Use, One English Copper Halfpenny for each letter, over and above the Postage charged thereon." (d-19)

From these instructions it is clear that though the word "Penny Post" is used, and though Dockwra in London charged one penny for his delivery services, the charge in America was different.

Whether the delivery man was very happy about this arrangement is somewhat in doubt. Of course the fee of "One English Copper Halfpenny" was a welcome advantage to him, but since he was the collector of the monies and many of the letter's addressees were unable to pay either the postage or the delivery charge, for the simple reason that they did not have money in the denominations required, the man had to keep two accounts: one with the post office for the unpaid postage, and one to keep track of the credit he had given to his customers for the "Penny Post" charges.

The Postal Law of 1765, which was passed by the Parliament "for altering certain Rates of Postage, and for amending, explaining and enlarging several Provisions in the Act of the Ninth of Queen Anne, and other Acts relating to the Post-Office" clarified, among other things, the payments due upon delivery of a letter by or on behalf of a ship's captain, who was sailing without a mail contract. This

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(d-19) University of Pennsylvania Library. (See also page B-44).

Act stated:

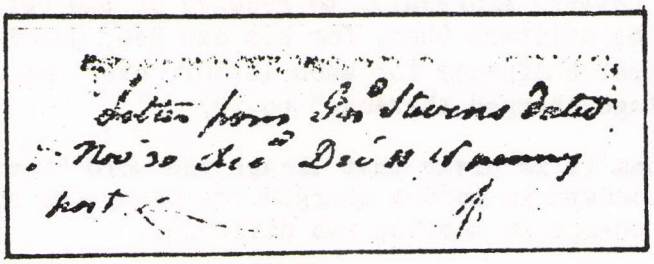
> "That the Post-Master shall take for every Letter brought by such vessel, for any Place within his Delivery, One Penny, above the Penny, paid to the Master or other Person for the same (delivering such letters to the post office)."

This provision is copied here from the last paragraph of the public notice shown on page D-11.

It is clear that the extra penny to be taken (from the addressee), together with the postage due and the captain's penny, is meant to cover a postmaster's expense of conveying a letter to "any Place within his Delivery."

American Penny Post letters are hard to find. During the extensive search for study material only one item was discovered which showed evidence of having been handled by the New York Penny Post service. It originated in Burlington, New Jersey, and was sent "p. Stage". Due to its very poor condition reproduction of the cover is impossible. However, the addressee upon receipt of the letter made a notation on the cover's reverse which reads:

> "Letter from Jno Stevens dated Nov 30
> Recd Decr 11 ... penny post."



D-37. Fragment of a letter from Burlington to New York, November 30, 1771, per "penny post". (Herbert Bernstein).

Very recently two covers were brought to this writer's attention which originated in Elk, Maryland, dated 1773, and were addressed to Philadelphia. Surprisingly both carried a triangular marking in red reading: LETTER / PENNY / POST. Apparently the designer of the handstamp had Dockwra"s marking in mind when he decided on a three-cornered imprint. However, there exists serious doubt of its authenticity. (See the Epilogue on page W-3).

Pre-1789 Postage Rates

Distance in mi.	o) June 1 1711 sh. d.	Oct.10 1765 sh. d.	1774-1775*) sh. d.	Sep.30 1775+) dw. g.	Oct.17 1777 dw. g.	Apr.16 1779 dw. d.	Dec.28 1779 dw. g.
60	.4	.4	.5¼	1. 8	2.--	4.--	26.16
100	.6	.6	.8	2.--	3.--	6.--	40.--
200	.9	.8	.10½	2.16	4.--	8.--	53. 8
300	1.-	.10	1.1	3. 8	5.--	10.--	66.16
400	1.9	1.--	1.4	4.--	6.--	12.--	80.--
500	2.--	1. 2	1.6½	4.16	7.--	14.--	93. 8
600	2. 6	1. 4	1. 9	5. 8	8.--	16.--	106.16
700		1. 6	2.--	6.--	9.--	18.--	120.--
800		1. 8	2.2½	6.16	10.--	20.--	133. 8
900		1.10	2. 5	7. 8	11.--	22.--	146.16
1000		2.--	2. 8	8.--	12.--	24.--	160.--

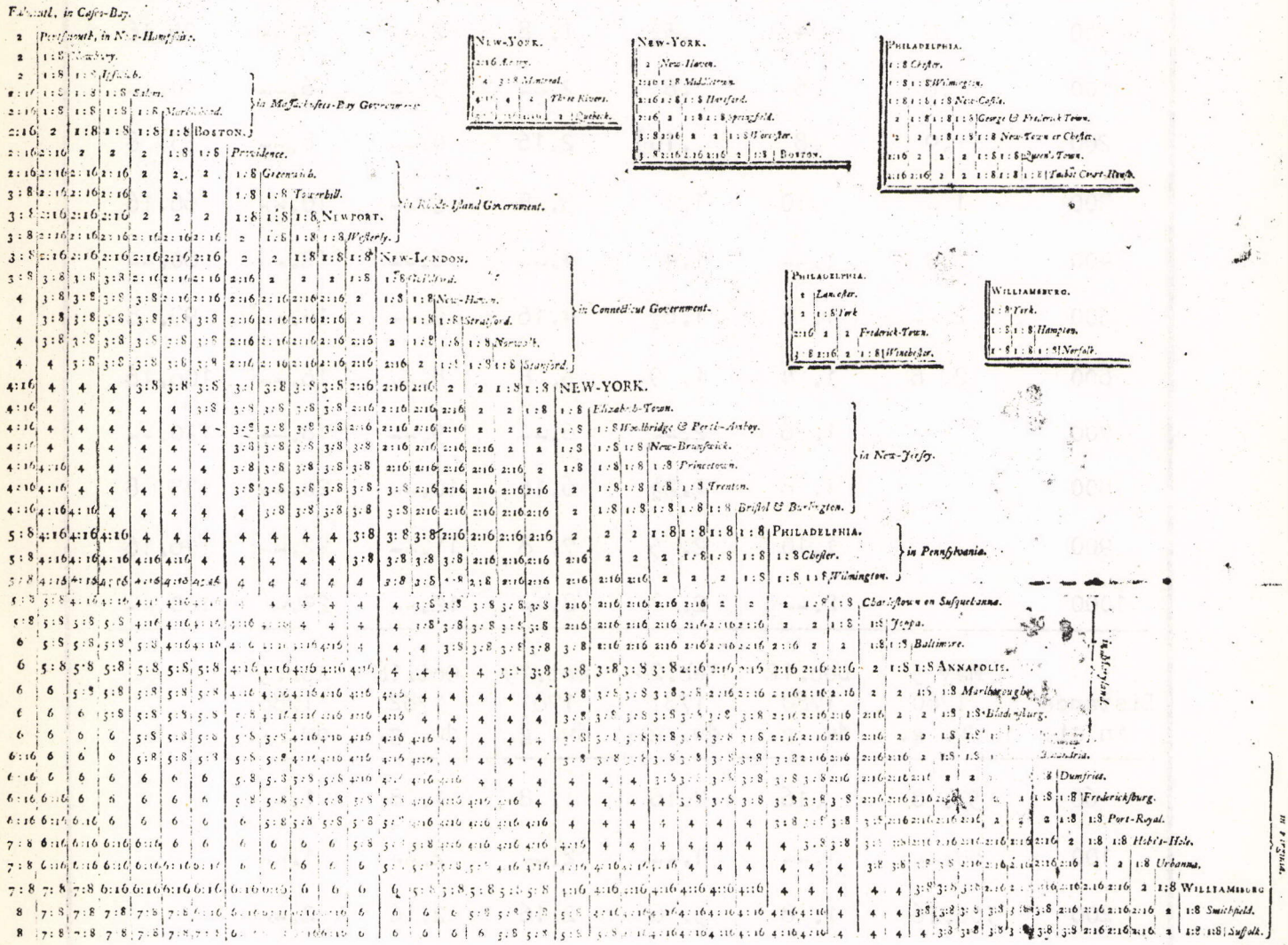
Distance in mi.	May 5 1780 dw. g.	Dec.12 1780 dw. g.	Feb.24 1781 dw. g.	Oct.19 1781 dw. g.	Oct.18 1782 dw. g.	Apr.5 1788 dw. g.
60	53. 8	.16	2.16	1. 8	1. 8	1.--
100	80.--	1.--	4.--	2.--	2.--	1.--
200	106.16	1. 8	5. 8	2.16	2.16	2.--
300	133. 8	1.16	6.16	3. 8	3. 8	2.16
400	160.--	2.--	8.--	4.--	4.--	3.--
500	186.16	2. 8	9. 8	4.16	4.16	3.16
600	213. 8	2.16	10.16	5. 8	5. 8	4.--
700	240.--	3.--	12.--	6.--	6.--	4.16
800	266.16	3. 8	13. 8	6.16	6.16	5.--
900	293. 8	3.16	14.16	7. 8	7. 8	5.16
1000	320.--	4.--	16.--	8.--	8.--	6.--

o) All dates effective dates. *) In local currency.
+) Rates of July 26, 1775 were suspended Sept. 30, 1775.

TABLES of the Port of all Single Letters carried by Poſt in the Northern Diſtrict of *North-America*,

as eſtabliſh'd by Act of Parliament, paſs'd in the fifth Year of the Reign of his Majeſty King *GEORGE* the Third, entitled, *An Act to alter certain Rates of Poſtage, and to amend, explain, and enlarge ſeveral Proviſions in an Act made in the Ninth Year of the Reign of Queen* Anne, *and in other Acts relating to the Revenue of the Poſt-Office.*

Rated in *Penny-Weights* and *Grains* of Silver, at Three Pence *Sterling* for each *Penny-weight.*



EXPLANATION:

These TABLES ſhew the Rate of a Single Letter, from any one Poſt-Office to another, viz. by the Figure, or Figures, ſet down at the Angle of Meeting, or in the Square which points to both Places.

EXAMPLE,

To know the Poſtage of a Letter from *New-York*, to *Williamsburg*. Look in the Table for *New-York*, and thence carry your Eye ſtrait down till it comes oppoſite to *Williamsburg*, and in that Point of Meeting you'll find [4:16] which is *Four* Penny-weight *Sixteen* Grains of Silver, for the Port of a Single Letter between thoſe two Offices.

I. The Rates ſet down in theſe Tables muſt be doubled for all Double Letters, and trebled for all Treble Letters, and for every Ounce Weight Four times as much muſt be charged as is here ſet down.

II. All Ship Letters and Packets muſt be charged, over and above the Rates ſet down in theſe Tables, with *ſixteen* Grains Weight of Silver, for ſuch as are received from on Board; and with *eight* Grains Weight, for ſuch as are directed on Board any Ship or Veſſel; And the whole Poſtage of theſe laſt Sort, muſt be paid down at the Poſt-Office where ſuch Letters and Packets are delivered in.

III. For all extraordinary Poſts and Expreſſes that along the Poſt Road, and for all Expreſſes ſent from any Stage to any Place out of the Poſt Road, there muſt be charged and paid One Penny-weight of Silver for every Mile ſuch Expreſs ſhall be ſent.

B. FRANKLIN.
J. FOXCROFT.

Note, In the above Tables, the ſeveral Places are ranged as they lie in the Courſe or preſent Route of the Poſt.

The [illegible] from Table [illegible] of the Poſt-Office Guide. *Note, [illegible] Tables are to be paſted [illegible] Board, a Map or Plan, in the moſt convenient Place in each reſpective Poſt-Office.*

Rates established by Parliament, October 10, 1765.

E. American Ship Letters

Alex.L.ter Braake

To the uninitiated a "ship letter" is a written message carried by a ship. In a very general sense such a statment would be correct. A "ship letter" certainly was carried by a ship. However, a postal historian's definition of the double word narrows it down to a letter shipped by a sea-going vessel which was operating without a gouvernment mail contract. During the 18th century many transatlantic letters were sent forth that way to and from America.

In view of the monopolistic character of today's letter service, when all such mail goes through government's or semi-government's hands, no ship letters are sent or received any longer. The Ship Letter Office in London operated from 1799 to 1847. During its life it handled all correspondence to and from the United Kingdom which was carried by non-commissioned ships. It ceased to fill a need when practically all overseas mail went by ships operating under a mail contract. Without being too specific it is correct to state that the youngest "ship letter" is at least one hundred years old.

In colonial and pre-constitutional days the American ship letter played an important role. Decade after decade all transatlantic mail was carried by private ships. The British government of the 17th and early 18th centuries did not believe in overseas mail services at their own risk, by chartering vessels or by operating their own. And for good reasons. Several experiments had taught the Postmasters General that the hazards, both physical and financial, were too serious and too many. As long as their own requirements could be met by sending government messages by war ship, and as long as the pressure from business interests did not force them to do otherwise the colonies were exclusively served by private ships until 1755. Even then many letters continued to cross the Atlantic Ocean both ways as ship letters.

It is often hard to define clearly the nature of the 17th century mail carrying facilities, particularly because they varied considerably in the individual colonies. The brigs and schooners which plied the seas between New Netherland and the home country were privately owned. However, the Dutch West India Company, their proprietor, had been given governmental prerogatives by the Dutch States General and, based on its monopoly rights, prevented any other cargo vessels but their own from entering ports within the territory it claimed to be Dutch. Therefore the letters their ships carried can not be classified as "ship letters".

The few ships - and there were very few - which tried to serve the

postal needs of the Swedish settlers along the lower shores of the Delaware River were in that same category.

The Virginia ships of the tobacco fleet were owned and operated by private firms. During the early days of the 17th century the correspondence they moved back and forth was not subject to government regulations at either end of their voyages. Similar conditions prevailed in New England where privately owned ships brought timber to the British ship yards and carried all kinds of supllies to the colonies on their return trips. They carried the mail.

Gradually certain customs developed. In Boston one penny was paid for each letter to a ship's master which was considered a fair compensation for the care he had exercised in bringing the mail to the other side.

But even letters which were brought in from abroad in those days to Virginia and New England could not be called "ship letters", because there still was another requirement which had to be fulfilled for classifying them more specifically as such. They had to be delivered by the ship's master or on his behalf by a member of the crew at the post office in the first port of call. As long as there were no post offices in operation no incoming written messages from abroad could be called "ship letters" in the true sense of these two words. Consequently a postal history researcher does not have to hunt for such rarities which were written during almost the entire 17th century, since no post offices were operating then in colonial America.

Theoretically there may have been one or two exceptions. For example the Boston post office which was created by the Massachusetts Act of November 5, 1639, was established for the specific purpose to "prevent the miscarriage of letters... brought from beyond the seas" and the postmaster was expected "to take care that they bee delivered or sent according to their direction ..." At least two of the requirements for a letter to be classified as a "ship letter" were filled. Such letters were carried by private ships, and there was a post office in Boston at that time. Whether the post master's obligation "to take care that they be delivered" included his responsibility for making the ship's captain bring the mail to the post office is problematic.

When during the century's last decennium the provincial government created post offices and appointed postmasters, under the auspices of Thomas Neale and Andrew Hamilton (e-1), circumstances developed and regulations were promulgated which marked the birth of the true "ship letter". For example the "Act for the Encourageing A Post Office", passed by the New York legislature on November 1, 1692, stated:

> "... Be it further Enacted by the authority aforesaid that all Letters and Pacquetts that by any master of any Ship or vessell or any of his Company, or any Passingers therein Shall or may be brought to this port of New York, other then such Letter's as are before

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(e-1) See the Chapter on Andrew Hamilton.

> exempted, Shall by Such Master Passinger or other Person be forthwith delivered unto the Post Master of New York ..."

Similar provisions were a part of the postal ordinances which became effective in other colonies. From then on a ship's captain's duty to give a letter that was entrusted to him the best chances of reaching its intended destination by turning it over to America's budding postal system was going to run like a red thread through the postal laws and regulations of the new century. The letters thus handled were "ship letters".

The custom of paying the ship's master a small fee, usually one penny, for each letter delivered by him to the post office was readily adopted by many of the colonies, though none of them entered that financial obligation into the wording of their ordinances. The General Accounting Office in London often objected to these payments because they were considered illegal. However, the Postmasters General strongly emphasized the importance of these gratuities to the captains. Without them, they declared, they would never be able to guarantee a safe and speedy delivery of the overseas mail. Many years of bitter experience had taught them that without some kind of remuneration at the delivery end of the voyage letters would be destined to an uncertain fate on a table top in a dockside tavern.

Colonel Whitley, the British deputy postmaster general of the sixteen seventies, often complained that so many matters, which entered the country from abroad, were privately delivered. As a result the post office failed to receive an income from this substantial volume of letter traffic. He "met the situation by giving the captain 1 d. for each letter or packet that he delivered to the postmaster at a port." In 1673 Whitley wrote: "This was so well liked that scarcely a letter escaped us." (e-2)

But written regulations, and most certainly unwritten ones, had a way of being ignored. Some ship masters did not know that they existed and that they were bound by them. It took time before those new-fangled directives were accepted by the community of stubborn seafarers and as a result many a letter followed its ancient course. Even in later years when the post office had become a generally accepted institution letter writers continued to address their epistles to inns and taverns (figure E-1) . Of fundamental significance for the proper operation of the posts was the postal law passed by the Houses of Parliament in 1710, which has become known in the history books as the Act of Queen Anne. It came into operation on the 1st of June 1711. Among other details it formalized the captain's gratuity of one penny and thereby gave the ship letter its legal status. Its clause 16 stated:

> "And for the encouragement of all such masters of ships or vessels, or such other persons, on their arrival at such ports as aforesaid from any parts beyond the seas, to deliver unto the Deputy of Deputies of such Post-

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(e-2) Howard Robinson: Carrying British Mails overseas. New York, 1964, p. 24.

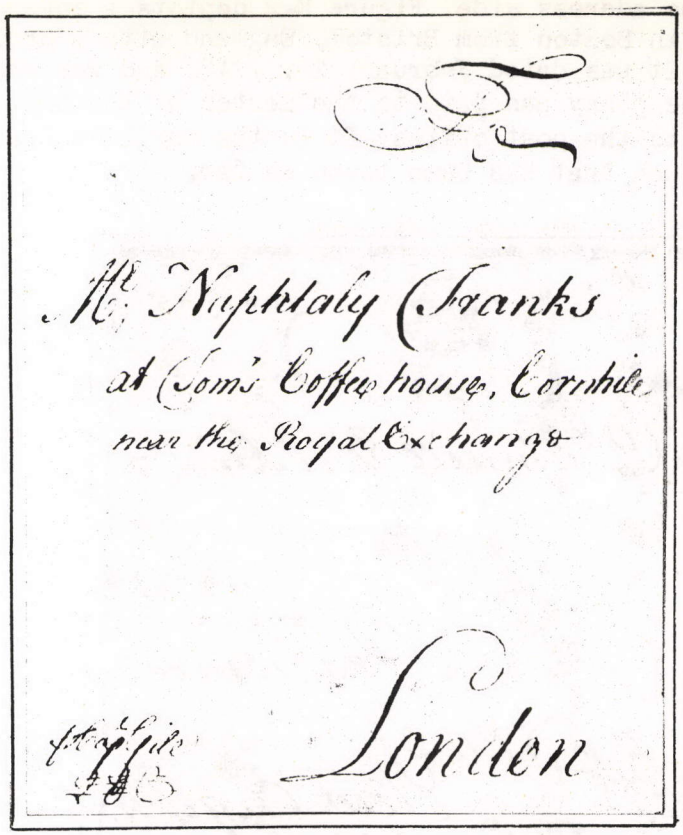
the Merchants and others, to whom the same were directed, in want of that speedy Advice and Intelligence, which they might have had, if the same has been forthwith dispatched by the Settled Posts, and sometimes such Letters have been delivered by the Masters or Passengers of such Ships, to ignorant and loose Hands that understand not the ways and means of speedy Conveyance and Delivery of Letters, whereby great prejudice hath Accrewed to the Affairs of Merchants and others, as well by the Miscarriage of many Letters so brought, as oftentimes by the Opening the same, to the Discovery of the Correspondency and Secrets of the Merchants; Be it therefore further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That all Letters and Packets, that by any Master of any Ship or Vessel, or any of his Company, or any Passengers therein, shall or may be brought to any Port-Town, or which shall arrive or touch at any Port belonging to any Port-Town, within any her Majesties Dominions, or any the Members thereof, or which shall be on board any Ship or Vessel, that shall or do touch or stay at any such Port-Town (other than such Letters as are before excepted) or may be sent by Common known Carriers in manner aforesaid, or by a Friend, as aforesaid) shall by such Master, Passenger, or other Person or Persons, be forthwith delivered unto the Deputy or Deputies only of such Postmaster-General for the time being, by him appointed, for such Place or Port-Town, and to be by such Deputy or Deputies, sent Post unto the said General Post-Office, to be delivered according to the several and respective Directions of the same, upon pain of Forfeiting the Sum of five Pounds of Lawful Money, for every several Offence against the Tenor of this present Act.

At Port-Towns Deputy Post-master to receive all Letters from on board Ships, &c.

And for the Encouragement of all such Masters of Ships or Vessels, or such other Persons, on their Arrival at such Ports, as aforesaid, from any Parts beyond the Seas, to deliver unto the Deputy or Deputies of such Postmaster-General for such Place or Port-Town at which they shall so Touch or Arrive, all such Letters and Packets as they shall respectively have on Board such Vessel or Vessels, every such Master or other Person for every Letter or Packet of Letters he or they shall so deliver unto such Deputy or Deputies, shall receive the Sum of One penny of such Deputy or Deputies, he or they Signing a Certificate of the Number of Letters delivered, and by what Vessel they came, and of the time when he or they delivered the same to such Deputy or Deputies, and giving a Receipt for such Number of Pence as he or they shall receive of such Deputy or Deputies; which Certificate and Receipt shall be by such Deputy by the next Post returned to the said Postmaster-General, together with the Letters so delivered, who shall have Credit on his Account for so much Money as any such Deputy shall pay on that Account.

And to give the Bringer a Peny a Letter, &c.

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That no Person or Persons whatsoever, or Body Politick or Corporate, in any part of these Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland, or other her Majesties Plantations and Colonies in the West-Indies and



E-1. New York, October 25, 1736, addressed to a London Coffee House. (American Jewish Historical Society, Waltham, Mass.)

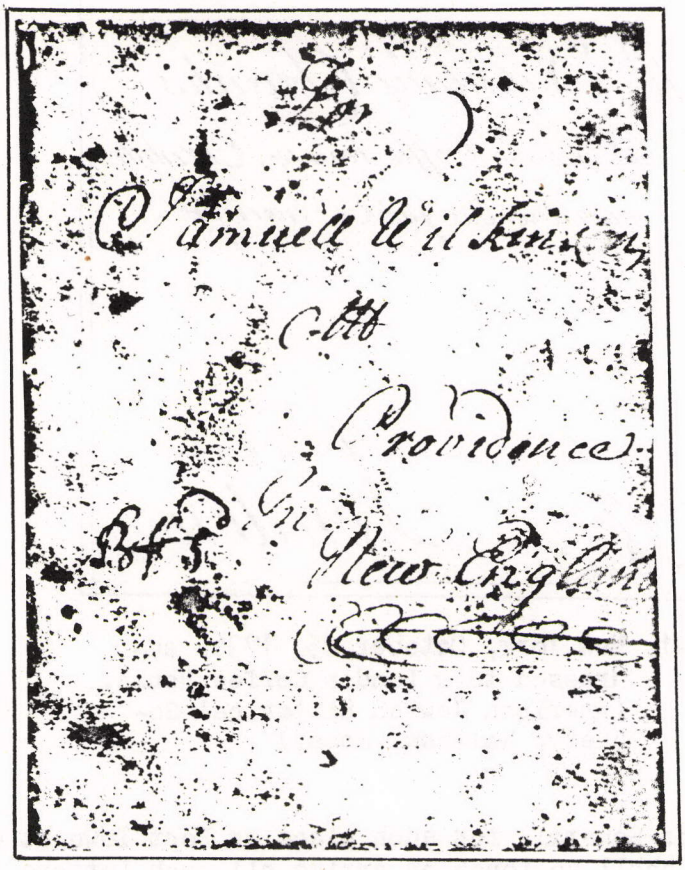
master General, for such place or Port Town at which they shall so touch or arrive all such letters and packets as they shall respectively have on board ... for every letter or packet of letters he or they shall receive the sum of one penny from such Deputy or Deputies ... he or they signing a certificate of the number of letters delivered and by what vessel they came ... giving a receipt for such number of pence he or they shall receive. Which Certificate and receipt shall be by such Deputy, by the next post, returned to the said Postmaster General, together with the letters so delivered, who shall have credit on his account for so much money as any such Deputy shall pay on that account." (e-3)

Many countries all over the world recognized the value of ship letter regulations and incorporated them in their postal laws.

Even prior to the Queen Anne Act appeared on the British statute books the outward mark on a ship letter was the initial "S", or the

(e-3) The original text of this provision is exhibited on page E-4. (Collection A.R.Kantor).

abbreviation "Sh" for "Ship", which used to be penned in front on the postage rate on the address side. Figure E-2 depicts a cover of a letter which arrived in Boston from Bristol, England with a providence R.I. destination. It was dated February 25, 1713, and was charged 5 pence, of which one penny was paid to the master of the British ship for delivering it to the post office. It is the earliest trans-atlantic letter marked as such that has been found so far.



E-2. Shipletter from Bristol, February 25, 1713, to Providence, R.I. via Boston. B(oston), Sh(ip) 5 d. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

The Act of Queen Anne also ordered payment of one penny over and above the regular postage rate for outgoing letters. This extra charge "for such as are directed on Board of any Ship or Vessel ..." seldom finds an explanation in the existing literature on the subject of ship letters. Yet it became a part of the postal regulations in America under the British regime as well as in those during the revolutionary years. In his instructions to the postmasters of 1754 (see figure D-4) Benjamin Franklin announced:

> "All Ship Letters and Packets must be charged (over and above the ... rates) ... with 8 grains weight each for such as are directed

> ... on Board any Ship or Vessel. And the whole postage of the last Sort forwarded to other offices must be Paid down at the Post Office where such Letters and Packets are delivered in." (See figure D-10)

This instruction was repeated by him in 1775 when the independent American post office had become a fact.

In a letter to Anthony Todd by Franklin and Foxcroft, which letter will be mentioned later in this Chapter, the American Deputy Postmasters General spoke of "the Trouble of Receiving a Letter and putting the same on board a Ship" and of taking a penny for this service. This explains the purpose of charging a noutgoing ship letter with an extra penny or 8 grains of silver.

As an example of this procedure a letter is shown in figure D-10 (see Chapter on Postage Rates),which was rated 4 pennyweights plus 8 grains of silver. It was mailed from New York to London and shipped out of Boston. Since the rate for a single letter between the two American cities at that time was 4 dwts the extra 8 grains, or one penny, covered the compensation for "The trouble of receiving a letter and putting the same on board a ship", and therefore was credited to the account of the post office.

Many years after Queen Anne's ruling on ship letter rates the regulations were amended, effective October 10, 1765. They read:

> "IV. And be it further enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That it shall and may be lawful for the said Deputy of Deputies to demand, have have, receive, and take, for every such Letter and Packet so delivered from any Ship or Vessel, other than Packet Boats, to such Deputy or deputies at the Posts in His Majesty's Dominions, as shall be directed to any Place within the Town belonging to such Post, or within the Limits of the Delivery of Letters and Packets by such Deputy or Deputies, the Rate or sum of One Penny, over and above what may now be received for the same."

This measure was made known to the American letter writer by announcements in the newspapers. The South Carolina Gazette of October 31, 1765, edited by Peter Timothy, the postmaster of Charlestown,clarified the formal wordeng of the Act in the following words:

> "Public notice is given by Peter Timothy as Secretary to the Deputy Postmaster General of the Provinces of the Act of the Vth of George IIIrd related to the Post Office; ... That the postmaster shall take (from the addressee) for every letter brought by such vessel, for any Place within this delivery, One Penny, above the Penny paid to the master or other person for the Same."

The announcement made it clear that the additional penny was not paid to a ship's captain or other person who delivered a letter from overseas to the local post office. The ship letter rate was doubled, but the one-penny payment to a captain, the so-called "master's penny" remained the same.

This provision regarding the increased ship letter rate by the Act of 1765 was given considerable attention by Franklin and Foxcroft in their letter to Anthony Todd, Secretary to the Postmasters General in London dated Philadelphia, September 21, 1764, when they presented him a number of suggested amendments to the old postal law of 1711. (e-4)

In it they stated:

> "The rule of charging 2 d, or 16 grains of silver on every Letter coming from on Ship board, has been observ'd in America we believe from the first Establishment of the office here. Mr. Franklin, who is now by much the oldest Officer in America, found it the Practice, (and remembers ?) to have seen it in Tables of Rates printed long before his Time. He knows not on what it was originally founded, (being sensible that the Act mentions but a Penny) unless it were on the Considerations that have satisfied him in the Continuance of the Practice."

That the practice of rating a ship letter 2 pence in stead of 1 d. existed, at least in Boston, is proven by the charge on a letter from London, dated July 19, 1756, to Newport, R.I. via Boston (figure E-3). It carries a manuscript postmark: Bo Sh 2-16. Since the postage rate for a letter from Boston to Newport at that time was 2 dwts. the ship letter rate, which ultimately had to be paid by the addressee, was 16 grains of silver, or 2 pence, thus twice the amount allowed by the Queen Anne Act. Based on a study of Boston letters of the period, published by Blake and Davis (e-5), it would seem that the change from one to two pence came about between 1730 and 1740.

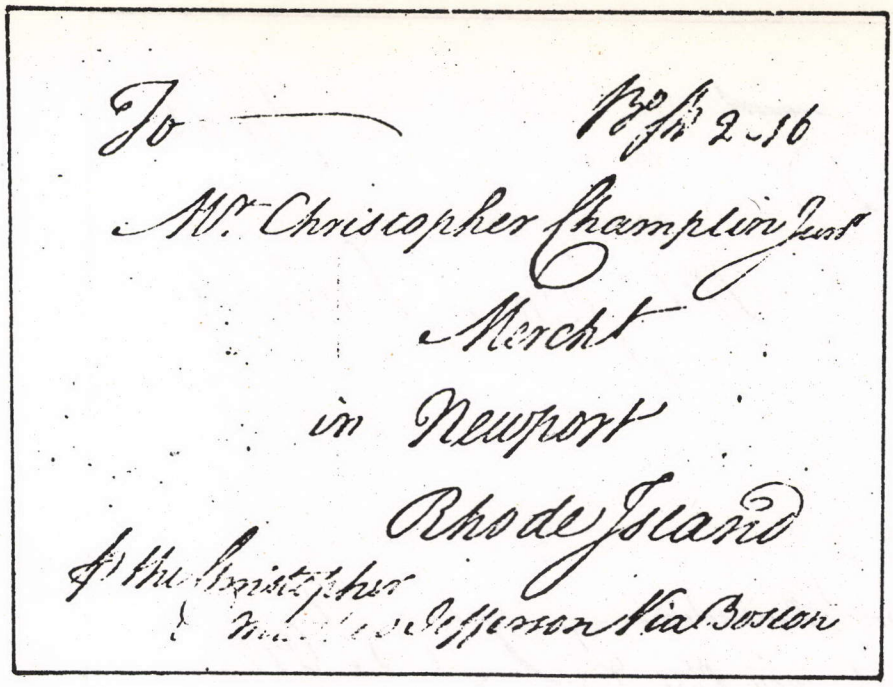
The purpose of charging the extra penny is fully explained in the Franklin-Foxcroft letter:

> "This Penny to the Office, added to the Penny paid the captain, makes the Twopence to be paid for the letter."

Much earlier in the century, and even previously, provincial administrations had a way of establishing their own regulations regarding local affairs, including those related to the post office.

(e-4) The draft of this letter is the property of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. It is quoted here with the Society's permission.

(e-5) Maurice C. Blake & Wilbur W. Davis: Postal Markings of Boston, Mass. (1964). P. 10.

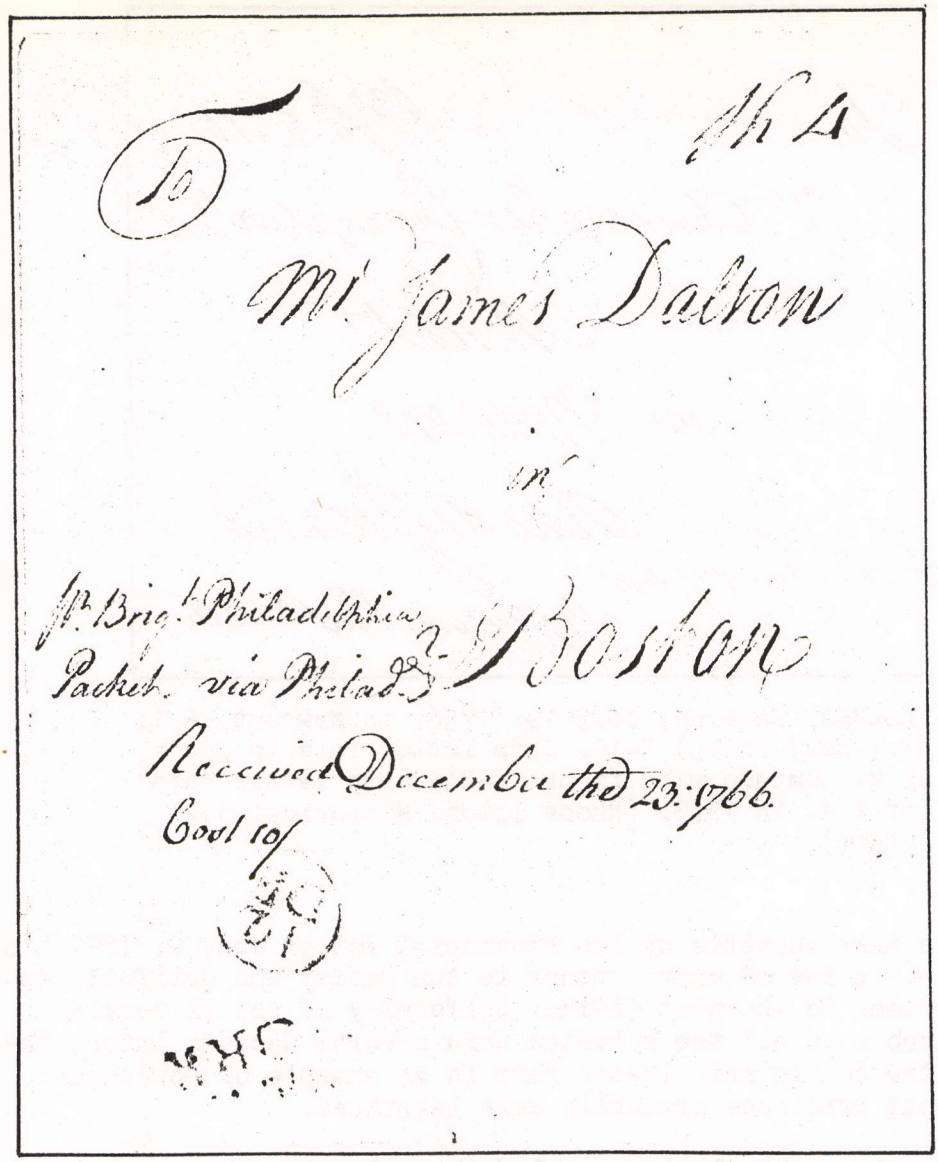


E-3. London, England, July 19, 1756, to Newport, R.I. Bo(ston) Sh(ip) 2-16. Ship letter rate 16 gr. = 2 d. Compare with figure E-2's ship letter rate of 1 d. in 1713. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

For instance Massachusetts by its Provincial Act of June 9, 1691 had decided to pay a fee of only ½ penny to the master who dutifully delivered a letter to the post office. Uniformity of postal regulations applicable to all the colonies came several decades later. The history of the double ship letter rate is an example of how unauthorized local practices gradually were legalized.

More American ship letters sailed the Atlantic Ocean in both directions than any other waters. The Caribbean Sea was a poor second. It is surprising that not one single ship letter, marked as such, could be located which had entered South Carolina from abroad through the port of Charlestown, though the city boasted of a flourishing trade with the West Indies. The same is true for Savannah, Georgia.

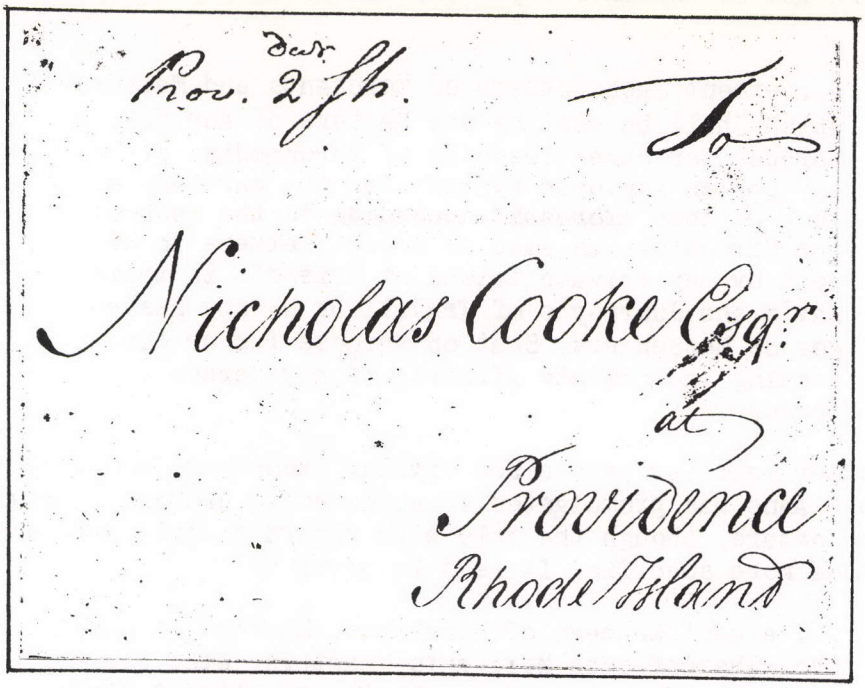
Intercolonial correspondence between the south and north often went by water. However, hardly any such ship letters of the 1758-1788 period have been preserved. An example is exhibited in figure E-4. Some of the regular coastal shipping lines called themselves Packet Lines, though few of them had official status covered by a post office contract and then only during specific periods, for instance in war time. The postage rate for a single letter sent from colonial port to colonial port in such a case was 4 pence, or 1 dwt. 8 gr.



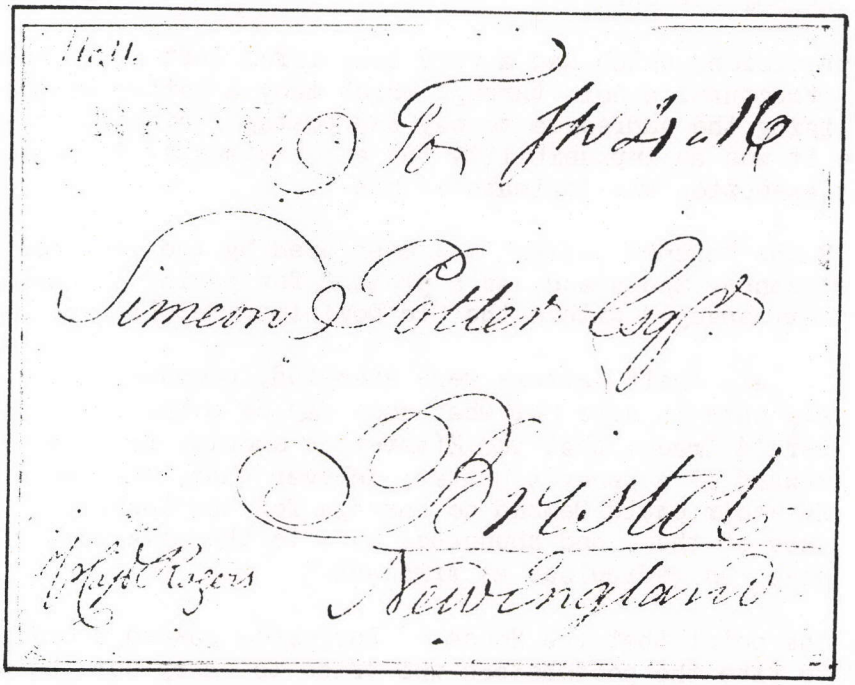
E-4. Charlestown, November 27, 1766. Ship letter to Boston via NEW/YORK, brown, 24 x 12. Bishop mark 12/DE(CEMBER). Rate New York-Boston 3 dwts. 8 gr. plus ship letter rate 16 gr. total 4 dwts. (Clements Library, Ann Arbor).

The three most important Atlantic seaboard post offices, those of Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and in that sequence, handled the bulk of the ship letter traffic. Samples of ship letters which entered the American postal system via the lesser Atlantic ports are shown in figure E-5, E-6 and in VA 13 of Part II. Some of these belong to the rarities.

The American ship letter throughout its life carried a burden which proved hard to be thrown off. Traditionally letters containing documents which referred to merchandise of any nature and conveyed by any carrier were exempt from all postal regulations.



E-5. Amsterdam, the Netherlands, June 25, 1764 to Pro(vidence) 2 dwts. Sh(ip). (Rhode Island Historical Society).



E-6. London, England, February 25, 1774, to Bristol, R.I. via NEWPORT, red, 41 x 5. Sh(ip) 4.16. Triple ship letter, Newport-Bristol 3 x 1.8 = 4 dwts + 16 gr. ship letter rate. (J.H.Smith).

The New York Act of November 11, 1692, stated this principle as follows:

> "... except Such Letters of Merchants and Masters which Shall be sent by any Masters of any Ship's, barques, or other Vessells of Merchandize or by any person imployed by them for the carriage of Such Letters aforesaid according to the respective directions as also to Except Letters to be Sent by any Private friend ot Friend's in their Way's and Journey's of Travail or by any Messenger or Messengers, Sent on Purpose for or concerning the private Affaires of any person or persons."

The other colonies recognized similar exemptions and when the Act of Queen Anne was promulgated it appeared to contain a provision of the same nature, though the rule with regard to this category of mail was made more specific. It read in part:

> "... except Letters of Merchants, Masters of Ships, etc. whereof such Merchants, Masters, etc. are Owners, and delivered to the Owners without Hire or Award, etc. and except Commissions, Affidavits, Writs, Process, or Letters send by Friends or Messengers sent on purpose concerning the private Affair of any Person."

This provision, which had a very long life, left a big hole in the postal structure, a hole through which many a letter slipped without obliging the addressee to pay any postage, rightly or wrongly, because it was an impossibility for any postmaster to ascertain whether the exemption was legimate or not.

In 1717 the "exempt letter" was even used by the governor of Virginia, Alexander Spotswood, as a pretext for paying no postage at all for letters conveyed within the Old Dominion. He claimed that:

> "... all their letters were exempted, because scarce any came in here but what some way or other soncern'd Trade; that tho M(aster)'s should, for the reward of a penny a Letter, deliver them, the Post M(aste)r could Demand no Postage for the Conveyance of them, and abundance more to the same purpose, as rediculous as Arrogant."

It came to the point that the House of Burgesses passed a bill which threatened to fine the postmasters who tried to carry our the provisions of the Royal Act. As a result Virginia excluded herself from the normal postal intercourse with the other colonies.

Half a century later the exempt ship letter provision was still on the law books. Finlay in his 1774 survey report complained about the existing abuses in the following words:

> "... the Deputy at Falmouth (Portland, Me.) once attempted to put the law in force and took the letter-bag of one of those vessels to the office, but it made such a bustle and noise in town that he dared never attempt it again ... It's well known that not one letter in ten accompanys goods. Yet the law is so defective that the act can never be put to force."

Since non-commissioned stage lines were operating then between a number of towns in the north (See Chapter on The post Office and its Master) the drivers claimed the same freedom from postage for the letters they carried.

During the years of the revolution very few ship letters were processed by American postmasters. They belong to the great rarities. One such letter is illustrated in figure F-34. It originated in Bath, England, was carried by a private ship to Boston in spite of the war hazards at sea, and was forwarded from there on May 6, 1778 to its destination, Charlestown, S.C. The Boston postmaster rated the letter 19 dwts., which reflects the 50% increased postal rates imposed by the Continental Congress on October 17, 1777.

The existing literature provides very little information regarding ship letter rates during the period of sky-rocketing inflation (See Chapter on Postal Rates), when letter postage in 1780 was increased up to forty times the rates of 1775. However, one single bit of evidence has come to light from a hitherto unreported source, a measure passed by the South Carolina legislature on "the 29th day of March, 1778." In part it read as follows:

> "Whereas it is necessary for the speedy and safe conveyance of letters within the State to establish certain regulations for the post-offices within the same, in addition to such as are already made by the Honorable Continental Congress:
>
> I. .....
>
> II. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, That the master of every ship or vessel arriving in any port of entry in this State and delivering the letters brought in such a vessel as aforesaid, shall be entitled to receive from the deputy postmaster at such post office, one shilling and three pence currency for every letter so delivered; and that there shall be paid to said deputy post masters respectively, for each and every letter so received by them, two shillings and six pence currency, by the persons to whom the same shall be delivered."

This piece of South Carolina legislation discloses three interesting details.

In the first place it deals with ship letter mail destined for

places "within the State", as a measure additional to those "already made by the Honorable Continental Congress." Tacitly it refers to Article IX of the Articles of Confederation, whereby a clear distinctiom was made between regulations applicable to postal traffic between offices operated by the national government and those of a local character. The subject is more extensively dealt with in the Chapter on The Post Office and its Master.

In the second place the South Carolina Ordinance reveals that in the spring of 1778 the ship letter rate expressed in local currency had risen to one shilling three pence, consequently was materially affected by the country's economic troubles. It is uncertain, however, how much of the increase was due to the devaluation of the South Carolina shilling and what part of it by the general trend of higher postage rates, if any. The ambiguity is caused by the last part of the Act's second paragraph whereby it was established that the charge for local delivery of letters in South Carolina was the same as the ship letter rate, which had not been the same previously. The Continental Congress on September 30, 1775, had established the latter at 2 pence sterling. Then on October 17, 1777 it was decided in Philadelphia to increase the national postage rates by 50 %. Assuming that the ship letter rates did not participate in this increase the South Carolina payment to the ship's masters of 1 shilling 3 pence would mean that the devaluation of the local currency at that time was $7\frac{1}{2}$:1.

Thirdly, this piece of legislation in its last lines refers to a charge payable by addressees to whom a letter "shall be delivered". Two shillings and six pence currency were due in such cases. Apparently South Carolina had adopted the principle of the "penny post" (See Chapter on Postage Rates), though modified by currency inflation.

When the fighting had stopped and peace was in sight the United States in Congress decided that it had "become necessary to revise the several regulations heretofore made relating to the Post Office". As a result of their discussions an Ordinance was passed on October 18, 1782 by which among other things, it was ordained that:

> "... for every letter, packet or other despatch from beyond the sea, which any person shall so deliver at the Post Office, he shall receive of the Postmaster, at the Post Office, for the delivery of the same, 1/90th of a dollar."

For a proper understanding of this regulation it should be pointed out that the "dollar" in this provision was the Spanish silver dollar, which had a standard value of 4 shillings, 6 pence sterling.

It is significant that the draft for this Ordinance provided for the usual exempt clause, but that it was stricken from the final text. It took courage on the part of the delegates to take this step after all the arguments that had been voiced for the exemption in

the past. However, according to Oliver W. Holmes (e-6) "both in practice and in subsequent legislation" the contents of the deleted paragraph continued to be recognized.

(e-6) Oliver W. Holmes: Shall Stagecoaches Carry the Mail ? - A Debate of the Confederate Period. William and Mary Quarterly, Vol. XX (1963), p. 558.

F. Trans-Atlantic Mail in Colonial and Revolutionary Days

Alex.L.ter Braake

The Reverend Jonas Michaelius, New Amsterdam's first clergyman, may not have been the primogeniture of American letter writers, there can be no doubt that his epistolary account of conditions in "Manhates" as he found them shortly after his arrival from the Netherlands in 1628 belongs to the earliest samples of transatlantic correspondence that have survived. To the few who have read the precious document, still in good condition after 3½ centuries of hazardous existence, it presents a clear picture of colonial life in its first primitive stages.

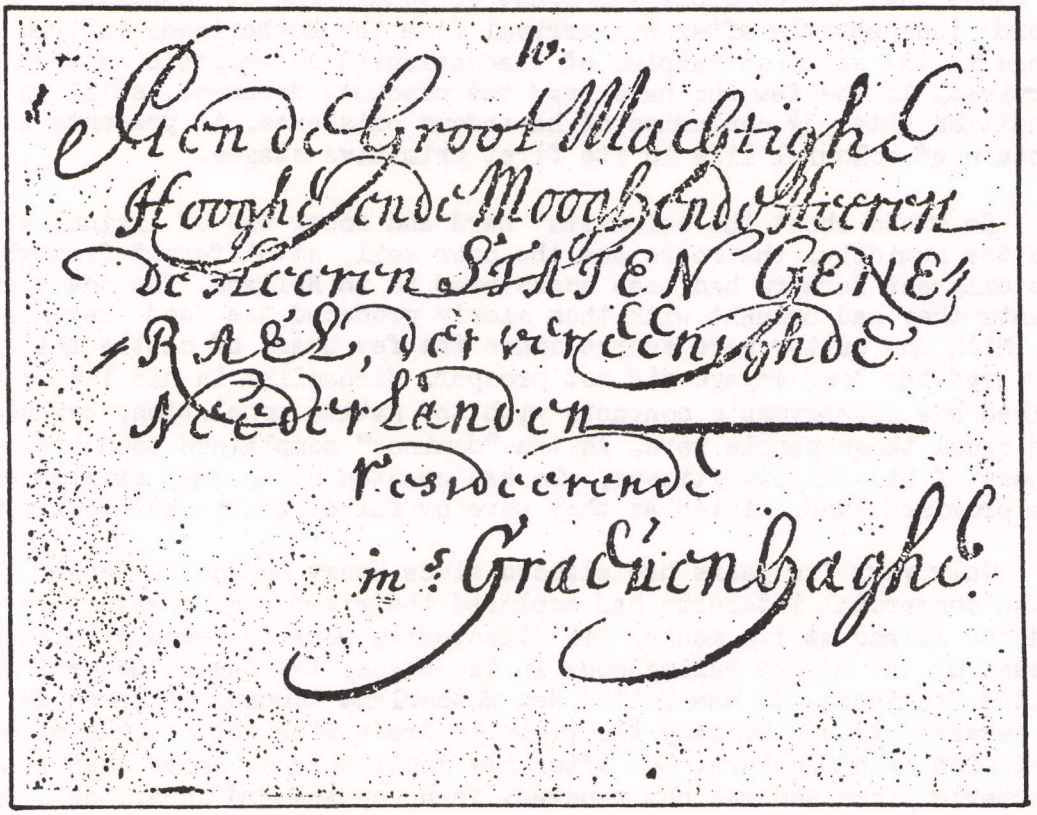
He wrote about the colonists' hard and sober way of living, the heat and the humidity, the rocks and the poor soil, so different from what the emigrant farmers had been accustomed to in Holland. The seeds and plants they had brought with them slowly produced the food they needed. Milk and butter were scarce since the few heads of cattle that had survived the long voyage did not prosper. Michaelius in his letter described his countrymen's contacts with the native population, how wicked and cruel those people were. And the "dominee" complained about the laziness of his fellow-citizens, who had counted on an easy existence in the promised land, misled as they were by false reports and poor advice.

Only very few years had elapsed since Henry Hudson on behalf of Dutch commercial interests had explored the river, now bearing his name, and the island at its mouth. His discoveries were followed by a charter issued by the mighty ruling body in the Hague, the States General of the United Provinces, to the United New Netherland Company on March 24, 1614. It reserved to the Company the right to trade with the natives with the exclusion of all others. But after its first term of three years the Charter expired and was not renewed. Then, on the 3rd June, 1621, the Dutch West India Company was founded, organized on the principles of its sister organization, the Dutch East India Company, which had been granted a trade monopoly in all territories to the east of Cape of Good Hope (f-1).

Though of particular interest to the general historian, the student of America's postal history, of early written contacts between the emigrant and those he had left behind, can also find a few details in Michaelius' letter which are important from his particular point of view.

In 1628, when the reverend gentleman sent his lengthy report to his relatives back home, the Dutch settlement on Manhattan counted approxi-

(f-1) Its full name: "Geoctrooyeerde West Indische Compagnie", or literally translated: "Chartered West Indian Company", in common English parlance: "Dutch West India Company".



F 1. Address on a package wrapper containing letters from the Governor's office on Manhattan to the States General in the Hague. July 26, 1649. (Government Archives, the Hague).

mately seventy families. It is no wonder that few letters were written in those days and that there was no need for a post office in the colony. What ever writings were shipped abroad, even during the following decades, consisted mostly of reports and correspondence by representatives of the West India Company and by gentlemen of the cloth to their superiors in Amsterdam.

An address on a package wrapper containing letters from the Governor's office on Manhattan to the States General in the Hague is shown in figure F-1. It was dated July 26, 1649.

There is one detail disclosed in the Michaelius letter which is of considerable importance to the postal historian, a detail which is seldom reported in old correspondence. It is the length of the trans-atlantic voyage. The "dominee" and his family had boarded the ship which was going to carry them across on January 24, 1628, in the roadstead of the island Texel, close to the northern tip of the Dutch mainland. They reached their American destination 74 days later, on the 7th of April. This demonstrates how slow trans-atlantic contacts were in those days, particularly during the stormy spring season. The voyage eastward usually took fewer days because the prevailing winds helped to speed it up. For those postal historians who try to find a yardstick in these figures for the time it took seventeenth century letters to reach their addressees it is good to realize that sailing dates were seldom regularly scheduled, consequently that prospective travelers and mail clerks had to be well informed about departure time in an era there were no telephone calls possible. Moreover delays were no exception. A ship may have been ready to sail but often had to wait days and sometimes weeks until conditions of wind and water made it possible to take off. Michaelius wrote: "After having waited long and patiently for a favorable wind in Texel" the captain gave orders to hoist sails and to lift anchor. Their course westward brought them close to Bermuda island.

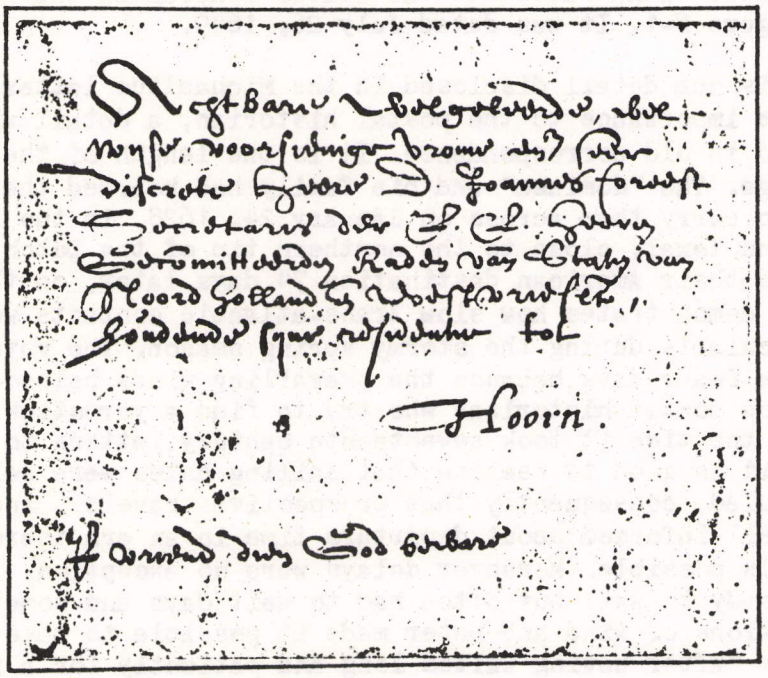
The address side of this rare letter is shown in figure F-2. In translation it read as follows:

> "Honorable, well learned, very wise, valient, and very discrete Sir, S. Joannes Foreest, Secretary of the Hon. Lords of the Executive Council of North Holland and West Friesland, residing at
>
> Hoorn."

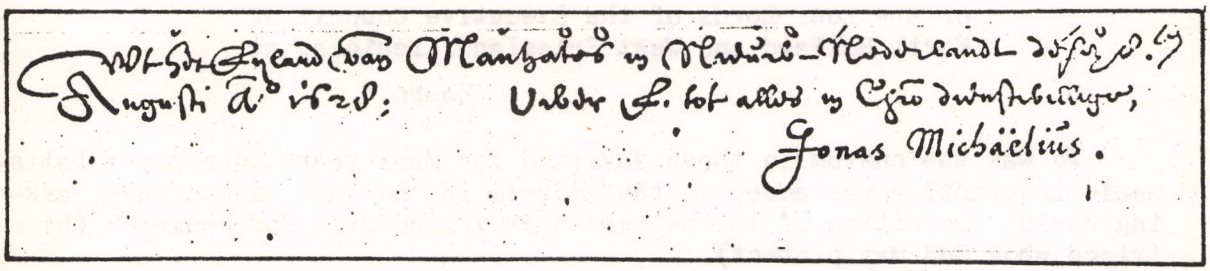
As was the custom in those days and for many years to come, a talismanic inscription was added to the address in the left hand corner, asking devine protection of the bearer: "per vriend dien God bewaere" (by friend whom God may protect).

The intermediary of a ship's captain, a member of his crew, or the courtesy of a traveling friend was a prerequisite for a safe delivery of a trans-atlantic message. A small fee often compensated their services, though in many cases a charge appeared to be unnecessary.

Figure F-3 depicts the date line of this precious document and the "dominee"s signature. In translation they read:



F 2. America's oldest trans-atlantic letter from "Manhates in Nieuw Nederlandt", 8 August, 1628, by the Rev. Jonas Michaelius, to Hoorn, the Netherlands. (Huntington Library, San Marino).
(HM 22028)



F 3. Date line and signature of the Michaelius letter.

"From the Island of Manhates in the New Netherland,
this 8th of August, 1628.

In all things your Hon.'s willing
servant in Christ,

Jonas Michaelius."

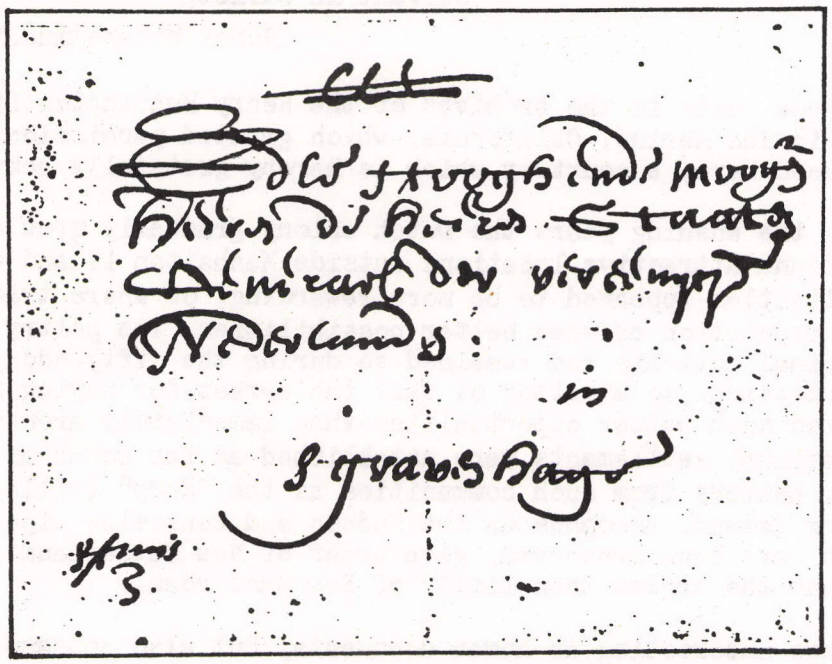
The letter now rests in the archives of the Henry Huntington Library and Art Galery in San Marino, California, which granted permission to it being reproduced here, a courtesy which is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

During the ensuing years the Dutch colony gradually grew as more emigrants found attractive locations outside Manhattan island where farming activities appeared to be more rewarding, or where trading with the native population offered better possibilities, The peltry trade was their principal activity and remained so during the fifty-odd years of Dutch colonization. As a matter of fact the market for buying fur up the river offered much better opportunities than immediately around Manhattan. The earliest settlements were established as far north as present-day Albany. Letters from such communities as the "durp" (village) Midtwoud on Long Island, Aesophus on the Hudson and Rensselaerwijck near Albany, which have been preserved, give proof of New Netherland's (f-2) growth beyond the narrow town limits of New Amsterdam.

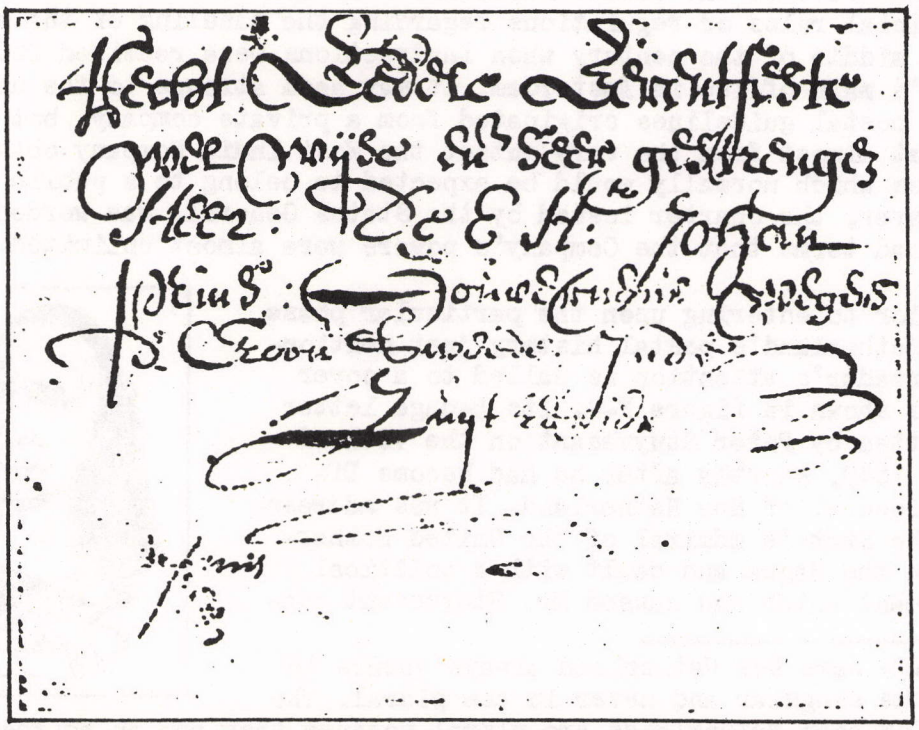
They are interesting as human documents, but also as samples of the earliest form of American intra-colonial and transatlantic communications. However, these letters carry no outside indications in the form of markings which could tell the postal historian how they were processed on this side of the ocean. Furthermore no evidence had been found of any official rules or regulations regarding the handling of the mail until the middle of the century when instructions were received from the Company's main office in Amsterdam. It may seem strange to the uninitiated that postal guidelines originated from a private company, but it is a fact that almost from the very outset the West India Company obtained prerogatives which normally would be expected to belong to a public authority. However, the charter issued by the States General, was worded in such broad terms that the Company's powers were almost unlimited.

Prior to entering upon the particular phase of New Netherland's postal history just mentioned the reader's attention is called to a cover which is shown in figure F-4. Its 5-page letter was written by Peter Stuyvesant on the 10th of August, 1649, shortly after he had become Director General of New Netherland. It was addressed to the State's Admiral of the United Netherlands in the Hague and dealt with a political development which had caused Mr. Stuyvesant con-

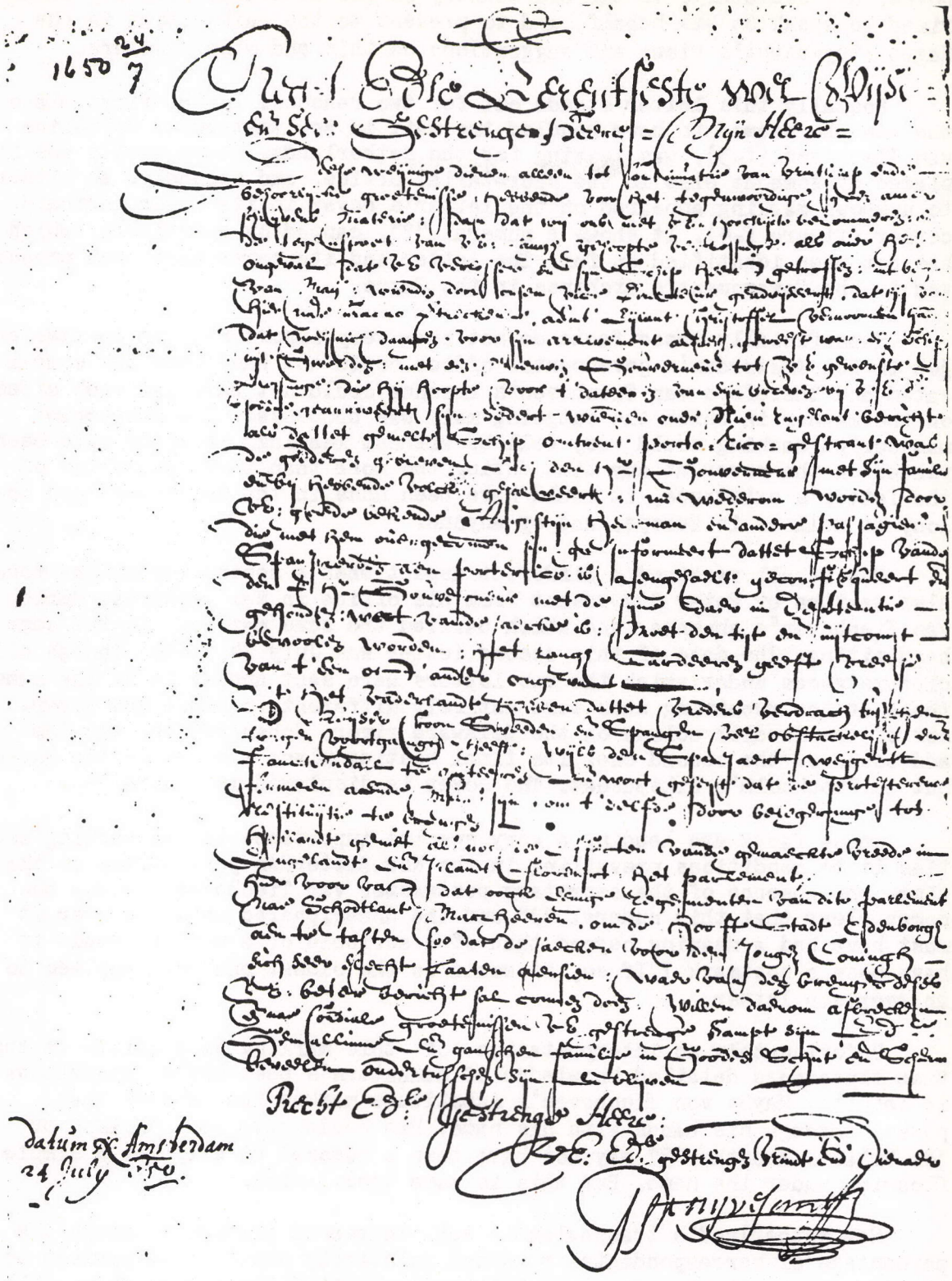
(f-2) "The name New Netherland always occurs in the singular and never in the plural. The European Netherlands are plural because they are an aggregation of small states; but there was only one New Netherland, and to speak of it in the plural, as many people do, is to commit a solecism." (John Fiske: "The Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America." 1899, p. 105.



F 4. New Amsterdam, August 10, 1649. Peter Stuyvesant to the Hague. (Gouvernment Archives, the Hague).



F 5. New Amsterdam, July 24, 1650. Peter Stuyvesant to Johan Prins (Printz), Governor of New Sweden on Zuyt Rivier (Delaware River). (Riksmuseet Stockholm).



1650 24/7

datum Amsterdam
24 July 1650.

siderable headache. He announced his decisison to send Cornelius van Tienhoven, his secretary, to the old country as his attorney, properly authorized to speak on his behalf, and to present to the authorities in the Hague Stuyvesant's views and suggestions on this and other matters.

Postally this letter stands out for two reasons. In the first place the man who seemed to have handled the mail in New Amsterdam, Cornelius van Tienhoven (f-3), was leaving for the Netherlands, consequently was replaced by someone else in the secretarial office, and secondly, an hitherto unknown marking appeared on the letter's cover in its lower lefthand corner (figure F-4). It shows a numeral "3", capped by a scribble, which has not been identified so far. The letter and its cover have been preserved in the Government's Archives in the Hague.

Superficially these facts do not seem very important. The postmaster's job in New Amsterdam's govenmental office could not have been too complicated and therefore van Tienhoven's absence could not have had much effect on the manner in which the outgoing mail was processed. The manuscript manuscript marking could very well be without meaning, it might have been placed on the cover at any time during the more than three centuries of the letter's existance, it could have been done in the New Netherland colony as well as in Europe, and by anyone.

But it all received a different aspect when a second letter was found, also written by Peter Stuyvesant from his office in New Amsterdam during van Tienhoven's absence, and which carried the same marking, in the same handwriting. The date of this second letter was July 24, 1650. Though all circumstances under which the two letters were sent appear to be the same those at the receiving ends were entirely different, because the Governor of the Swedish colony on the Delaware river, Johan Printz, was the addressee of the second one. Its final resting place was not in the Hague but in Stockholm's Riksmuseet. The cover is displayed in figure F-5.

These facts are lending a very special importance to the marking and ties it to conditions prevailing in the New Amsterdam post office at that time, the absence of the secretary-postmaster van Tienhoven. It now becomes clear that this numeral "3" and the undeciphered notation over it must have had a meaning beyond that of a scribble or a doodle. Could it have been a postmark ? If so, it would be the oldest one ever applied to an American letter.

Unfortunately no interpretation of this marking is possible at this time since more detailed knowledge of Manhattan's post office operations is lacking. Maybe van Tienhoven's substitute marked the letters that passed through his hands with his name. His could have been "Prins" or "de Vries". And the "3" may not have been a numeral at all, but a simple flourish under the name. But this is mere speculation.

New Netherland's transatlantic mail increased gradually though the percentage of correspondents remained relatively small in comparison to the growing population figures. Illiteracy limited its volume. Naturally fewer private letters survived than official or commercial correspondence

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(f-3) C.M.Hahn: Postal Services of the New Netherlands. The American Philatelist, April, 1973, p. 325.

which found a relatively safe place in government and business archives and files.

However, the fact that the West India Company deemed it necessary to issue postal regulations indicates that more and more private correspondence crossed the Atlantic. It is hard to say whether complaints about the handling of the mail by ship's captains and personnel alone were the reason for such measures. Letter writers in New Amsterdam probably suffered as much as people elsewhere from the carelessness by which their messages were delivered. However, it is almost certain that one of the Company's motives for taking an active interest in the flow of mail was a desire for self-protection. One had to be on one's guard against foreign competation and even against foreign aggression.

In the course of 1652 the West India Company informed Director Stuyvesant that in its Amsterdam main office a mailbox had been placed for the convenience of those correspondants who had letters to be despatched for the New World, to Brasil or to the West Indies, Curacao and Suriname, or to New Netherland for that matter. They would be sent out by the first vessel sailing for those destinations. The announcment went on to say:

> "... that the same may be done in New Netherland and that the letters put into a bag for greater security be sent here to us, to be delivered upon arrival to those whom they belong and who usually come to the warehouse; they then will not be obliged to hunt up the persons entrusted with letters and run after them." (f-4)

It is abundantly clear from the rest of Amsterdam's recommendation that its intentions went far beyond a desire to improve and safeguard the trans-atlantic mail. International politics were involved.

> "During these times of trouble with the English it may easily happen, that some ill-meaning Englishman residing here or other persons despatch letters to New Netherland and endeavor to excite your English inhabitants against you and the community. We think it therefore advisable, that you should examine the skipper of the ship and his people under oath and demand from them all letters entrusted to them and that you inspect all letters going herewith, opening all such, which you deem suspicious, so that in despatching this ship we may not carry a snake in our own bossom and bring letters to people, who are against us to our damage." (f-4)

But little if anything was done in New Amsterdam to satisfy the Company's wishes. Manhattan's private letter writers continued to give preference to what they had been doing for so many years and ignored the mailbox at the Company's headquarters. They still entrusted their overseas messages to traveling friends, or to members of a ship's crew.

In view of these unsatisfactory conditions more specific instructions were issued by the Company's main office in Amsterdam in order to put an

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(f-4) Letter dated August 6, 1652. W.I.C. Directors in Amsterdam to Peter Stuyvesant. (Albert S. Palmerlee: The American Posts, 1639-1692. Weekly Philatelic Gossip, Spet. 7, 1957, p. 54.)

and to those primitive and undesirable ways of handling the transatlantic mail. Both the senders and the captains were held responsible for strict adherence to the new regulations, which were promulgated by ordinances in 1657 an 1659.

Some of the original proclamations, in manuscript, have been preserved in the New York State archives at Albany. Unfortunately a fire in the government owned building has severely damaged these and other historic documents. Parts of the, however, have survived, though heavily scorched.

The earlier announcment was repeated: In order "that letters may be conveyed more certainly and better, a box is appropriated at the Office of the Secretary of the Director and Council, in which letters are to be deposited, ... (f-5)

Most surprising is a provision in the October 30, 1659 Resolution (figure F-7), which opened the possibility for senders to have their letters registred. Their mail was to be recorded on a list and a receipt would be issued by a clerk "Mits daer voor betaelende 3 Stuyvers in zeebout" (on condition of paying 3 stuivers in Wampun) (f-6).

Skippers were forbidden "to bring hither privately any more letters, on pain of One Hundred Carolus guiders each time they will be found to act contrary hereto". It was ordained:

> "... that no person shall, on the arrival of any ships, whether from the Fatherland or elsewhere, attempt to go on board at their first coming into port, either while yet under sail or lying at anchor, before or until the Fiscal or some officer of the Director and Council had been on board, and the Letters received and delivered to the Honorable General, on the penalty of Twenty-five guilders ..." (f-7)

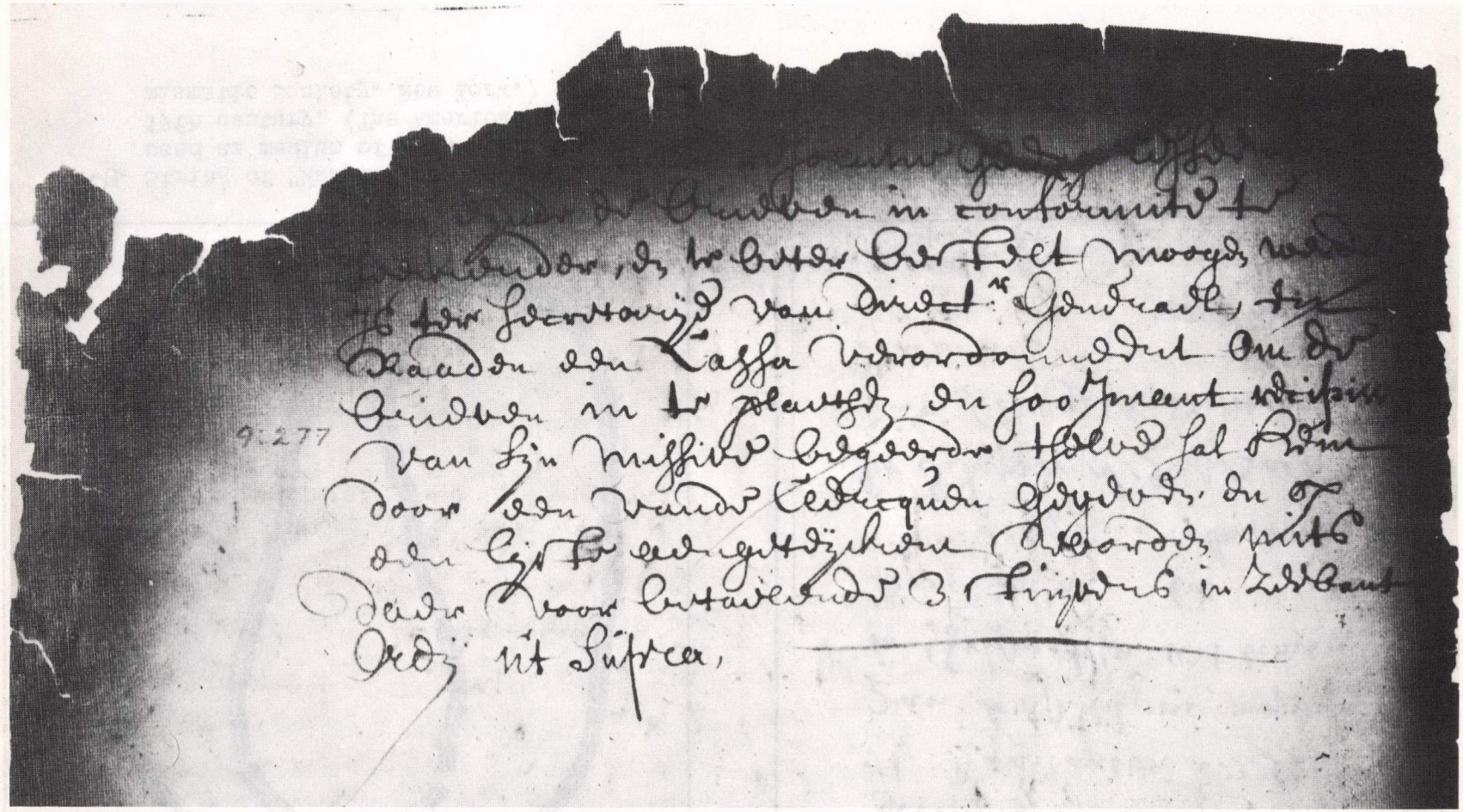
For the trouble of preparing a list and numbering the letters, whether at sea or in port, the ship's supercargo was entitled to receive three stuivers per letter. By this statement it is learned for the first time that an incoming letter was charged for a ship's services. Since one stuiver in those days was the equivalent of one penny the Dutch levied three times as much as the British did in New England.

Several overseas letters have survived which were sent out during the short period between the day this Ordinance was passed and the 4th of September, 1664, when Peter Stuyvesant surrendered New Netherland to Colonel Richard Nicolls, the commander of a British force. Such a letter is shown in figure F-9. It was written in Midtwout (present-day Flatbush) on August 8, 1662, and addressed to Amsterdam. On its way eastward and passing New Amsterdam it must have been subject to the regulations just described.

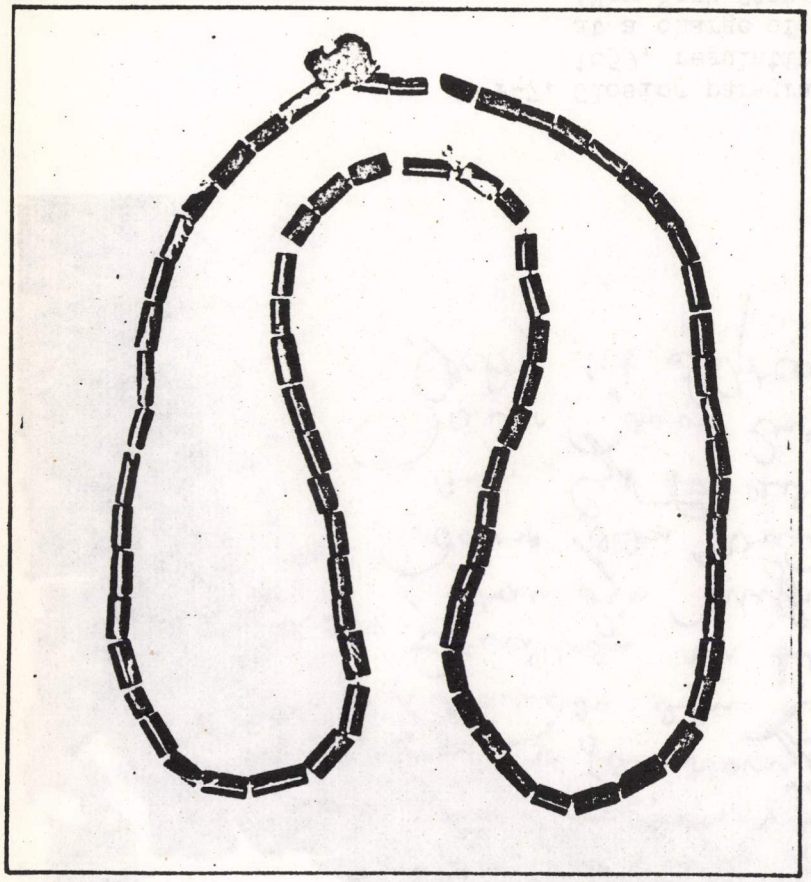
(f-5) Translation by A.J.F. van Laer.

(f-6) This primitive money, made of the inside of certain type of shells found on Long Island's beaches, early passed current at the rate of 4 beads for a stuiver, or two American cents. Black beads were valued twice as high. (Figure F-8).

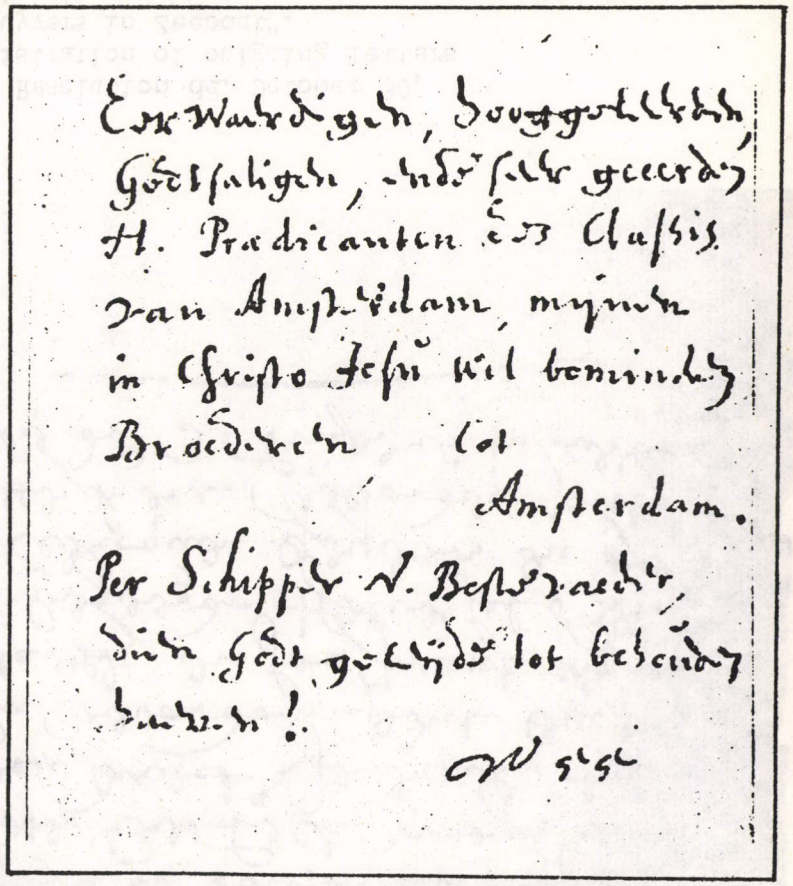
(f-7) New York Colonial Manuscripts, Vol. 9, pp. 276-7, Vol. 8, p. 605.



F-7. Closing paragraph of Resolution dd. October 30, 1659, regulating registration of outgoing letters at a charge of "3 Stuyvers in Zeebout". (New York State Archives).



F-8. String of "Wampun" or "Sewant", used as medium of exchange, early 17th century. (The American Numismatic Society, New York.)



Eerwaerdigen, hooggeleerden,
Godtsaligen, ende seer geeerden
H. Praedicanten des Classis
van Amsterdam, mijnen
in Christo Jesu wil beminden
Broederen tot
Amsterdam.
Per Schipper N. Bestevaeder,
dien Godt geleyde tot behouden
haeven!
W. Sige

F-9. Midtwout, L.I., August 8, 1662, to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, per skipper N.Bestevaeder, whom God may guide to a safe port.(New Brunswick Theological Seminary).

The home-ward bound ships of the Dutch West India Company, either from the West Indies or from New Netherland, ended their voyage in the well protected roadstead of Texel Island. From there the mail used to be carried to Amsterdam overland.

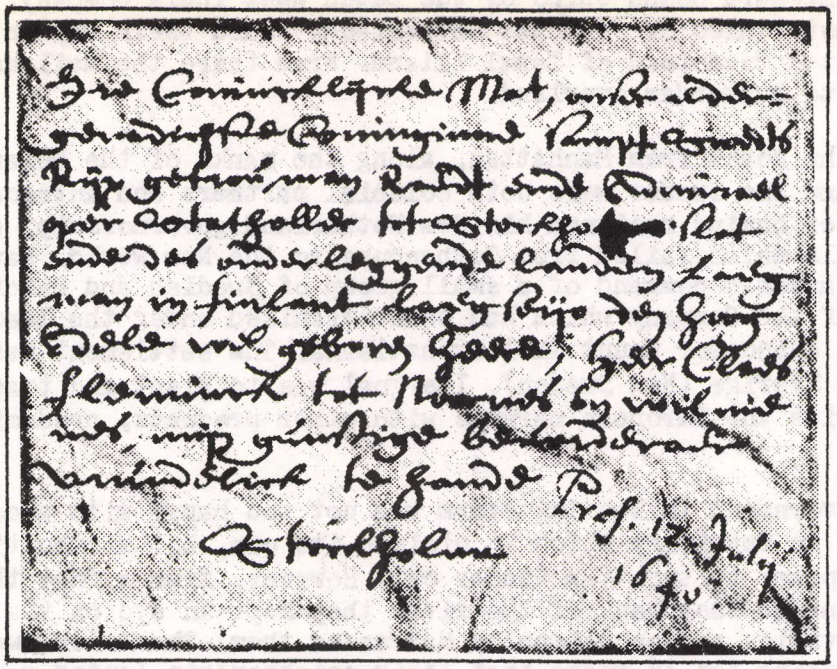
Down the coast from Manhattan, along the banks of the Delaware River, the Dutch and the Swedes were both colonial partners and antagonists. Peter Minuit, after having resigned his New Netherland governorship, commandeered a flotilla which sailed from Gothenburg to the New World. Having arrived in 1638 he assumed command of a small group of Swedish and Dutch emigrants on behalf of the Company which had been organized under the leadership of the Swedish Chancellor Count Axel Oxenstierna. The settlement was given the name of Nya Sverige (New Sweden). Its goal was to plant and trade tobacco, and to provide the European markets with other products, predominantly peltries.

The government in New Amsterdam was not too happy with a competitor established in territory which it claimed its own, but at the time it lacked the power to turn the Swedes out. However, from a fort the Dutch had built on the east bank of the river they kept an eye on the Scandinavian activities and occasionally harrassed them. The Dutch-Swedish relationship during the 36 years that their neighborship lasted varied from cool friendliness to outspoken hostility. In the autumn of 1655 it ended when Stuyvesant took command of a military operation attacking the Swedes from the north by a small army that marched through present-dat New Jersey, and by a naval force which sailed up the river. Little blood was shed. But the Dutch flag was hoisted on Tinian Island, the seat of government. When New Netherland fell into British hands New Sweden shared its fate.

Though no information regarding mail service from and to Nya Sverige has been found it may be assumed that similar administrative steps were taken as those promulgated in New Amsterdam. A small number of transatlantic latters addressed to Stockholm and Amsterdam have survived. The address side of one of those, written in the Swedish colony on May 23, 1640, is depicted in figure F-10. The language used in both the letter itself and the address is Dutch, demonstrating thereby the close relationship of the two colonial peoples. The postal administration in Stockholm clung to the good custom of marking the arrival date of these overseas messages on the cover. From it is learned that it took the illustrated letter fifty days until it was delivered in the Swedish capital.

In another letter the colony's trade commissioner, Hendrick Huygen, stated that his voyage across the Atlantic on the SWAN had taken him from August 19, 1642 to the 7th of November, or 80 days altogether, again demonstrating how time consuming the east-west sailings were. The letter also mentioned shipments of merchandise from the Swedish colony to France, where La Rochelle appeared to be the port of call.

Quite often the Swedes availed themselves of the more regular communications the Dutch had with their home country and sent their letters to New Amsterdam to be forwarded from there. On the outward voyage from Stockholm or Gothenburg their own ships used to pass by the Canary Islands, and from there took a course to Barbados and Antigua in the West Indies before being carried by the Gulf Stream northward to the Delaware estuary.



F-10. Fort Christina, Nya Sverige, May 23, 1640, to Stockholm, July 12, 1640. (Riksmuseet Stockholm).

During the last half of the Swedish administration its Governor, JohanPrintz, often complained in his letters that he never received any mail. Quite openly he blamed the Swedish government of lacking interest in its American colony. Shortly before his resignation in 1754 Printz stated: "I now in six years and a half have had no letter or message from my fatherland." (f-8) His last voyage homeward, accompanied by his family, was made on a Dutch ship via La Rochelle and Amsterdam.

New Netherland and Nya Sverige were not the only colonies on the American continent to suffer from postal insufficiencies in their overseas contacts. Frank Staff portrays the arrival of the British mail in New England in the following words:

> "What few letters there were would be carried by the captain to the principal tavern, and there be handed out to their owners. Letters for those not present would be left strewn over a table to be claimed later, and it is easy to understand the idle curiosity of those who did not receive any. Much fingereing and attempts to pry inside the covers resulted in actual theft." (f-9)

(f-8) Amandus Johnson: The Instruction for Johan Printz (1930).
(f-9) Frank Staff: The Atlantic Mail (1956), p. 20.

the bulk of the outgoing mail went by vessels of the so-called mast fleet, which brought British ship yards the badly needed timber. The tall pine trees growing along the Piscataqua River and its tributaries made good masts.

On November 5th, 1639 the General Council of Massachusetts passed the much quoted ordinance which promulgated directions for the receipt and delivery of letters to Boston, coming from and going to countries beyond the sea (See Chapter B. The Post Office).

The intent of the Dutch measures of a somewhat later date and of those proclaimed in Boston was the same, however there was a significant difference between the two. The New England government saw no need for a tough attitude and for stiff penalties in case of non-compliance. How successful they were has not been recorded. Of great importance were the last few words of the ordinance: "no man shallbee compelled to bring his letters thither, except hee please." In comparison the Dutch did not allow anyone to deviate from their government's instructions. It was the jealousy with which every claim to exclusive privilege was viewed", versus the monopolistic policies of the huge seventeenth century trading companies.

In Virginia, where all interest was centered upon the cultivation of tobacco and its trade and people anxiously guarded their individual prerogatives, no governmental measures regarding the handling of the overseas mail were deemed necessary. The ships of the tobacco fleet took letters homeward together with their valuable cargo, and on their return voyage delivered the necessities for the sustenance of the settlers, including messages from the home country.

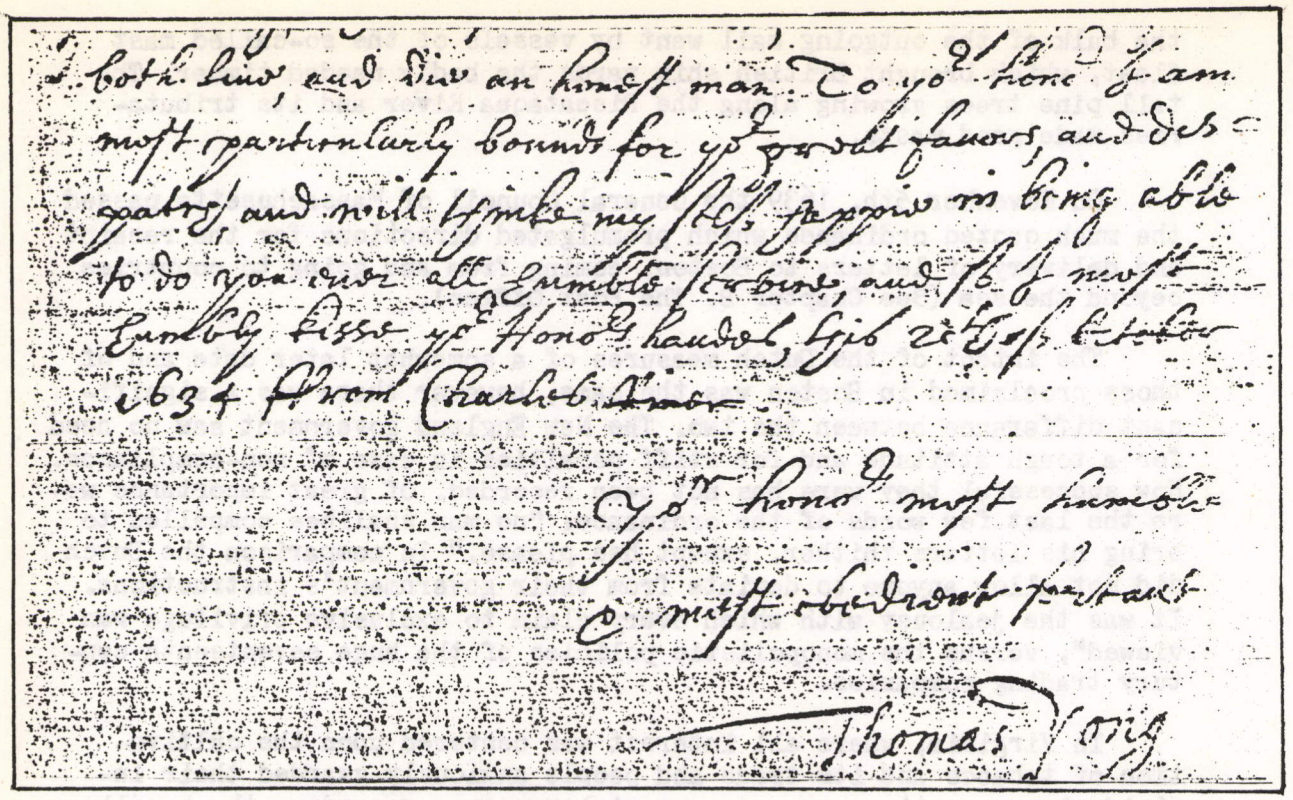
One of the oldest letters sent from Virginia homeward was written by a British explorer, Captain Thomas Yong, on October 20, 1634, and addressed to Sir Francis Windebanke. It was carried by Yong's lieutenantt and nephew, Robert Evelyn. The original of this historic document rests in the Virginia State Library. The last lines of the letter are reproduced in figure F-11.

The flowery words read:

> "To your Honor I am most particularly bound for your great favours, and despatch, and will thinks my self happie in being able to do you ever all humble service, and so I most humbly Kisse your Honour's handes this 20th of October 1634 from Charles River.
>
> Your honour's most humble
> and most obedient servant
>
> Thomas Yong." (f-10)

During Oliver Cromwell's regime in 1657 an ordinance was issued, and after the Restoration confirmed by law, which tried to regulate, among other things, the carriage of mail by merchant ships.

(f-10) C.A.Weslager: Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley, 1609-1664. (Philadelphia, 1961) p. 303.



F-11. Charles River, Va. October 20, 1634, to England. (Virginia State Library).

A General Post Office was created "for the speedy Conveying, Carrying, and Re-carrying of letters by Post, to and from all places within England, Scotland and Ireland, and into several parts beyond the seas." It subjected mail coming from abroad for the first time to inland postage. But its most important provision emphasized a captain's duty to deliver all letters which were placed in his care to the nearest post office immediately upon arrival. Apparently the skipper's failure to do so was considered to be the main reason for the many complaints which were voiced on both sides of the Atlantic.

But a regulation on paper without effective enforcement, and without proper control did little to improve the situation. The best remedy appeared to be to recompense the captains for prompt surrendering the letters they carried by paying them a fee of one penny a piece, a solution which was copied by many countries and remained in effect for almost two centuries.

However, it should be understood that this gratuity to the captains was in no way provided for in the Act just quoted. As a matter of fact the British Treasury at several times planned to disallow the payment of these fees by the Post Office. Only the urgent pleas of the Postmasters General could prevent the Treasury from interfering. These illegal payments continued to be made until the Postal Act of 1710 finally ratified the custom (f-11).

(f-11) See Chapter E. Ship Letters.

The preceding pages have tried to portray conditions in the American colonies during the early half of the seventeenth century related to the exchange of private letters with the Old World. Government messages were mostly carried by war ships. Few pieces of evidence have survived. But the little that is known shows clearly that each colony tried to solve its problems in its own way, that those solutions were hardly adequate, and that a ship's captain was the most prominent person in handling the overseas mail of those days.

The following decades were characterized by strife and war. They caused important changes in the life of the colonists and established a monopoly which was going to have its effect upon the transatlantic mail services for almost one and one half centuries. The perpetual struggle for maritime hegemony between Great Britain and the Netherlands was at the bottom of it. The economy of both countries rested on international trade and shipping. Spain was another competitor in the field, but it had been badly mauled by the Dutch, thus leaving the battle of the high seas to the other two.

In 1651 Oliver Cromwell, who was to become the Protector of the British commonwealth, found a powerful weapon against competing Dutchmen in an old law of 1381, the First Navigation Act. He saw to it that the Parliament resissued it in a somewhat different form, for the purpose of more vigorously protecting the country's economy. Among other things, it reserved the right of shipping between non-European countries and British ports exclusively to ships flying the Union Jack. Naturally the mail had to follow the flag.

The Dutch settlements on Manhattan and on Long Island, and those along the Hudson River, and also the Swedish-Dutch activities in Delaware country, had been as many thorns in the British lion's flesh. Cromwell's royal successor, king Charles II, made up his mind and decided that he was going to wrestle away these colonies from the intruders, because he claimed that the crown had title to the entire Atlantic coast from the 34th to the 45th parallels, based on the charter issued to the London and Plymouth companies of 1606.

In deep secrecy an expedition was organized to grab the big prize, the port of New Amsterdam. Ships and troops, cannon and powder crossed the Atlantic under the command of Colonel Richard Nicolls. On September 4, 1664, the Dutch, illprepared as they were, after a short battle, fighting with words in stead of swords and bullits, hoisted the white flag. Peter Stuyvesant wanted to resist the enemy with the poor forces and inadequate weapons he could command, but the local clergy made a strong appeal for a peaceful settlement. New Amsterdam and New Netherland ceased to exist. A flare-up in August, 1673, when the two powers were at each other's throat again, reinstalled the colors of the Dutch republic to the city, now renamed New Orange. But the British returned in November 1674. This time they became firmly established along the Hudson River, and remained so for a century.

Naturally the temporary reestablished Dutch regime was well aware of the continued British danger and took all kind of precautionary measures. On December 12, 1673, a law was passed forbidding intercourse or correspondence with the people of New England, their nextdoor neighbors in the north

> ".. and all others actual enemies of our State, much less afford them any supplies of any description on pain of forfeiting the goods and double the value thereof, likewaise from exchanging any letters of what nature soever may be, without having obtained previous special consent thereto. Therefore all messengers, skippers, travelers, together with all others whom these may on any way concern, are most expressely forbidden to take charge of, much less to deliver, any letters coming from the enemy's places or going thither, but immediately on their arrival to deliver them into the Secretary's office here in order to be examined, on pain of being fined One hundred guilders in Beaver, to be paid by the receiver as well as by the deliverer of each letter which contrary to the tenor hereof shall be exchanged or delivered.
>
> And finally, all officers, justices and magistrates of this Province are ordered and commanded to be careful that these presents be promptly put into execution, and the contraveners properly punished.
>
> Done, Fort William Hendrick, this 12th December, 1673.
>
> (signed) A. Colve
> (undersigned) N. Bayard, Secretary." (f-12)

Shortly before the fateful end of the Dutch regime the Reverend Wilhelmus van Nieuwenhuisen, in a letter dated "N.Orange in N.N.land de 26 July A.1674", reported to the Classis in Amsterdam "that our local church is still flourishing with God's blessing." He also voiced the colony's satisfaction about the existing peaceful relations between the city and the British kingdom. But the good preacher appeared to have a premonition of things to come. Three months later his fears came true. The British returned. The letter's cover and its last words are displayed in figure F-12. Under the address it carries the talismanic endorsement: "Met Schipper & Ship die Godt geleyde" (By captain and ship which the Lord may guide). A very rare Dutch interim letter !

Another church letter, written in newly christened New York, three years later, proves that the Dutch element in the city was still strong, and - surprisingly - that Duch ships still were allowed to enter and leave the port. Apparently the British at that time had reasons for not enforcing their navigation law too strenuously. Figure D-1 in the Chapter on Postage Rates shows a business letter, dated Midwoud, October 9, 1677, addressed to Amster-

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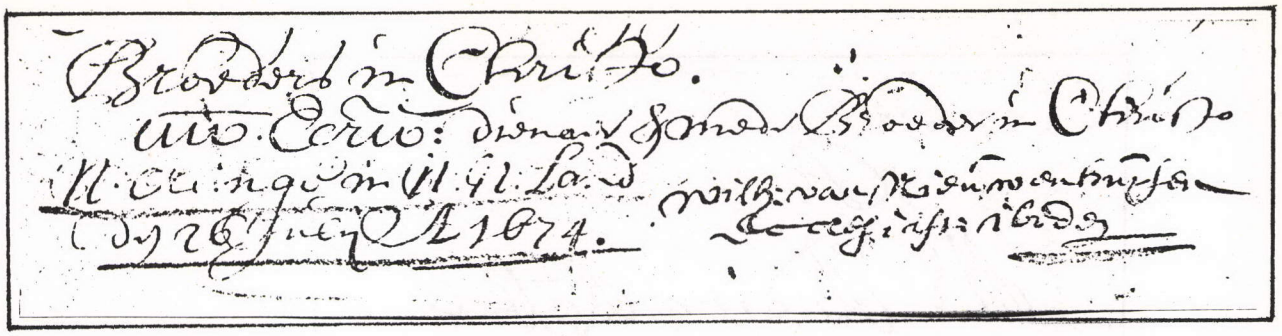
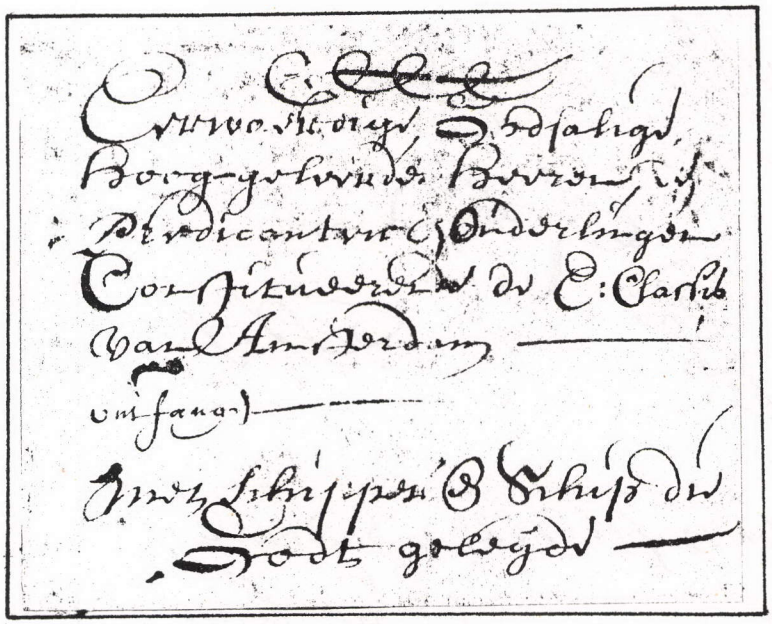
(f-12) New York Colonial Manuscripts, Vol. XXIII, p. 173.



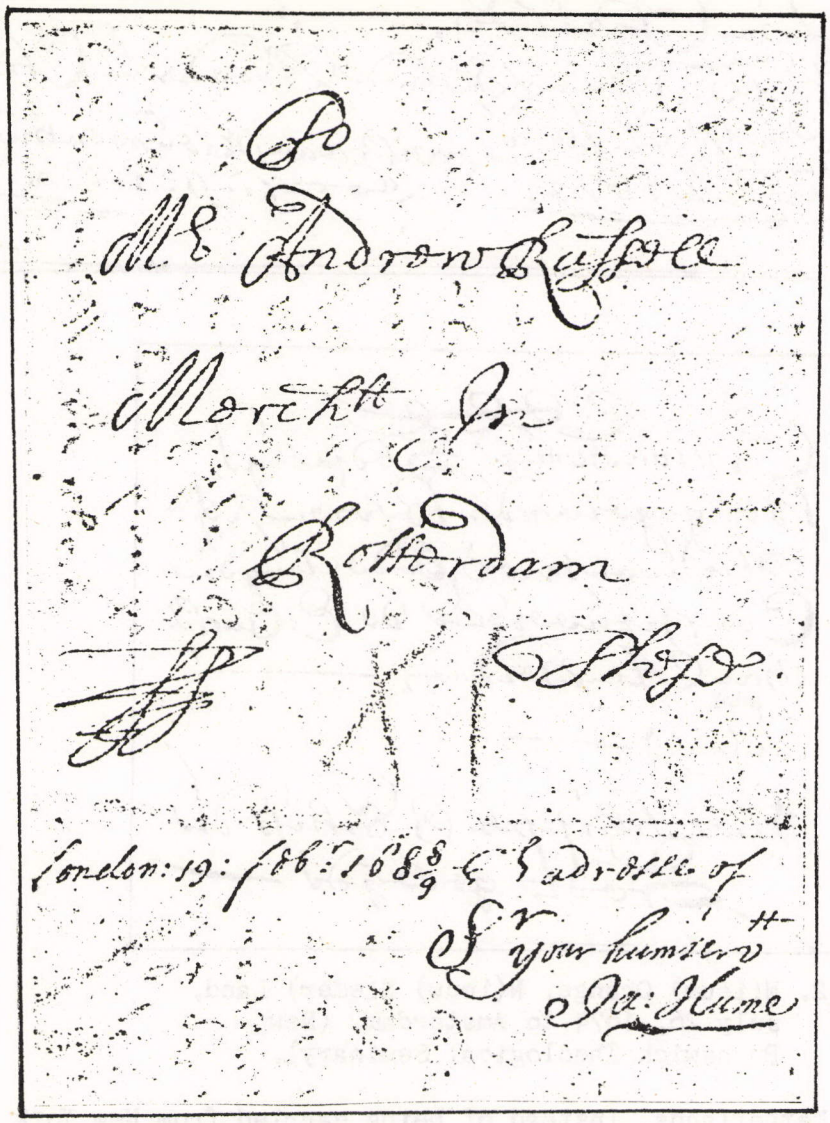


F-12. N(ieuw) Orange, N(ieuw) N(eder) Land, July 26, 1674 to Amsterdam. (New Brunswick Theological Seminary).

dam in the Netherlands. Instead of being carried from New York to an English port, it went directly to the roadstead of Texel, as evidenced by the circular handstamp, decorated with a posthorn. From there it was sent to Amsterdam by the Netherlands postal system at the regular rate of 3 stuivers, marked in red crayon on the face of the cover.

However, these kinds of British courtesies did not last. Soon afterwards all American mail with European destinations was carried by British ships, processed by postoffices in England, and dispatched from there. Figure F-13 depicts such an American letter. It is a counterpart to the cover of figure A-5 in the Introduction of this series. The forwarding agent's endorsement and the 11 stuivers manuscript rate marking in red chalk prove that the letter passed the London post office which sent it on its way to Rotter-

dam via Hellevoetsluis and Amsterdam.



F-13. Boston, January 4, 1688/89, to Rotterdam, via London, February 19, and Amsterdam. London-Rotterdam rate 11 (XI) stuivers. (Siegel Auction. From Faulstich collection).

In those days a mail contract was in effect, concluded by the British postmasters general and the municipality of Amsterdam, specifying among other things that all letters with continental destinations would be sent to the Amsterdam post office via the Dutch ports of Brielle or Hellevoetsluis, for further distribution. The London-Amsterdam rate was 8 pence (f-13) or 8 Dutch stuivers. An additional charge of 3 stuivers

(f-13) W.G.Stitt Dibden: Four Hundred Years of Anglo-Dutch Mail, 1574-1965. pp. 4-7.

had to be paid for the distance Amsterdam-Rotterdam, making the total postage due 11 stuivers.

The word "These" finds an explanation in an ancient expression "by these present writings", and abreviated to "these" (see the Introduction). This custom was still adhered to in the 18th century.

The mysterious looking obliterated "ff" marking in the lower part of the address indicates local charges on the American side had been paid by the sender (ff stand for franco), but in order to obviate misunderstandings on the European side it was crossed out.

From the endorsement by the forwarding agent in London it is learned that it took 46 days for this letter to reach the British capital. Since the legal year in England ran from the 24th of March to the 23rd of the next year it was the custom of dating correspondence written between the first of January and the 24th of March with both years. Hence the forwarder's: "London: 19: febr. 1688/9." This practice was continued until 1752 when the Gregorian calendar was officially introduced by the British government.

The handling of the outgoing mail in British New York was still a primitive procedure as illustrated by the following quotation from a traveler's journal, written in 1678:

> "Having closed up our letters, we had Robyn (a member of the ship's crew) at our house, and gave them to him in his own hands, as we had heard from the supercargo himself that he would run into Falmouth again for the purpose of paying the duties; we gave Robyn money to post our letters over London (to Holland), together with something for his trouble, and with this, wishing him the blessing of the Lord, we took leave of him; but recollecting afterwards that we had forgotten to put a date to the letters, which was very necessary, I had to goe in search of Robyn again, whom I found at last, and took back from him the letters. When we had resealed them, I went after him again, but he had gone on board the ship. I waited for an opportunity and went on board myself, and handed them to him again." (f-14)

Little is known of the overseas correspondence of the settlements in the Carolinas during the 17th century. However, from a letter copy, dated Charlestowne May 18, 1680 it is learned that written messages reached England in those days. One paragraph reads: Wee have a dayly correspondence from the Barbadoes and wee frequently hear from the Northren (sic) Barmudoes Jamaica,

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(f-14) Jaspar Dankers and Peter Sluyter: Journal of a Voyage to New York (Brooklyn, 1867), p. 154.

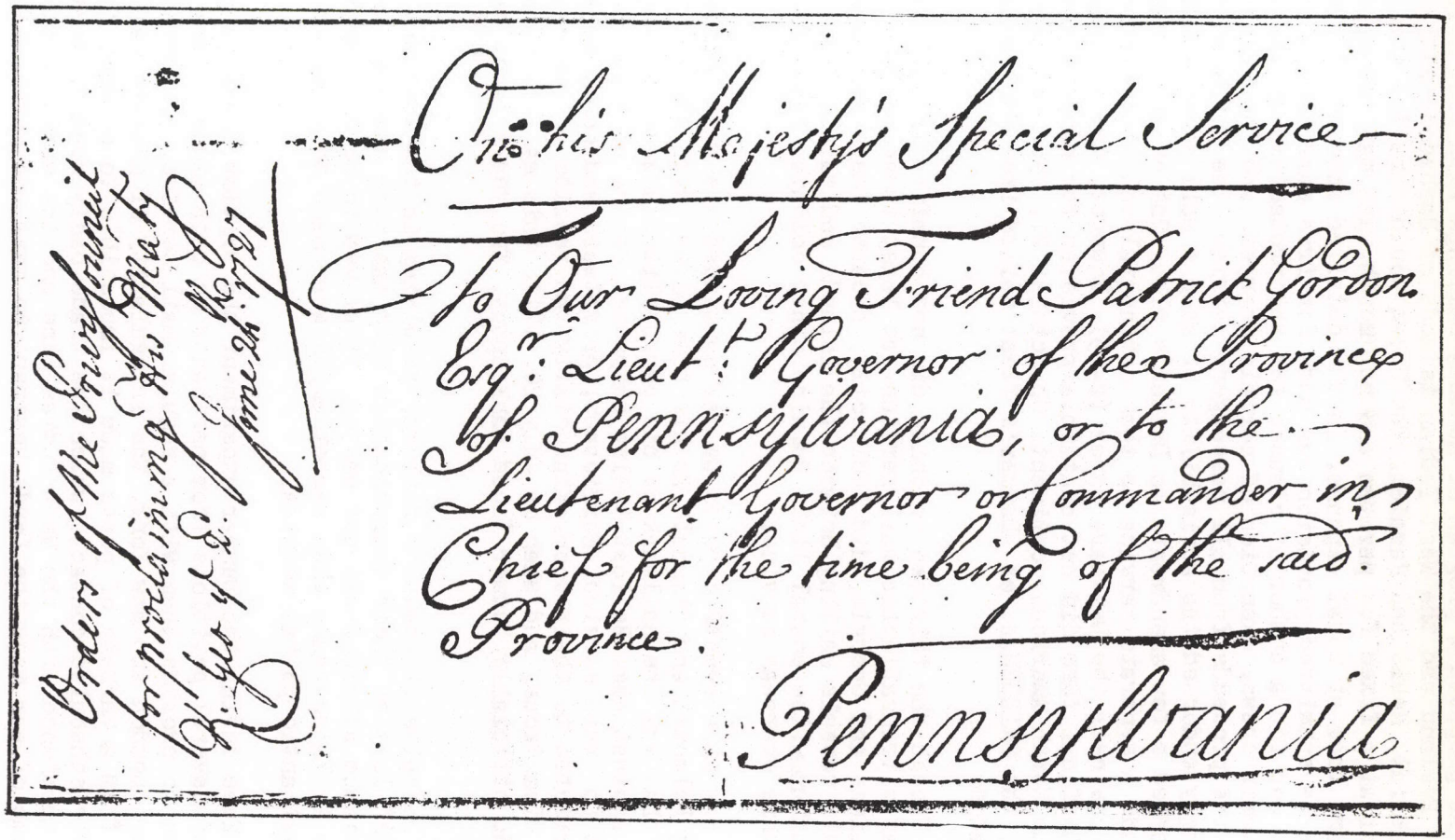
and these ships which doe trade to the bay of Camolecha (Campeche) doe oft call here for provision."

The end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the new century brought significant changes in the form of the transatlantic postal services. The British government realized that the growing trade with the West Indies and with the American colonies was in great need of a speedy and reliable system of handling correspondence. It did not favor the more or less haphazard opportunities for conveying letters across the ocean which private shippers had been offering in the past. Business houses at home and abroad were anxious to see their overseas postal connections improved. At several occasions they urged the government to undertake a properly scheduled mail packet service of a nature similar to the one that had been in operation for a number of years under the auspices of the General Post Office connecting England with other European countries, such as Spain, and Ireland and the Netherlands. The government itself felt handicapped often when it was in urgent need of a speedy contact with its representatives in colonial America. Their dispatches used to be carried by warships. However, these were not always available for such a voyage. It led the Lord Secretary Nottingham in 1702 to complain: "I do not know how to contrive to send on the letters to Barbadoes, New England, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Leeward Islands, Carolina and Bermuda."

An interesting piece of official mail sent to the colonial governors by a British man-of-war is depicted in figure F-14. It conveyed a message from the Privy Council, dated June 24, 1727 announcing the death of King George I, and the succession to the throne of George II.

However when it came to actual planning of packet mail services across the vast expanses of water that separated the home country from its colonies the physical and financial consequences appeared almost unsurmountable. The ships would have to be fast and armed in order to be able to protect themselves from possible enemies and pirates, therefore well manned. The costs would be high. The expenses could not be expected to be covered by sufficient revenue from postage and cargo could not be carried. The Treasury had many objections.

Such was the situation when in 1702 the Government received a a proposal from the man who operated a line of packets for them between Falmouth and a number of ports on the Iberian peninsula. Edmund Dummer had the reputation of being an experienced designer of fast ships, an excellent organizer, and in general a man of ambition and ability. In the British Navy he had reached the position of Surveyor General. All in all he was a person who had the ears of British officialdom. His proposal for a transatlantic packet service, which was submitted to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, received favorable attention. It resulted in several consultations with Dummer.



F-14. London, June 24, 1727, to Pennsylvania. On his Majesty's Special Service (by warship). (Carson collection).

He proposed a program of monthly sailings with four ships between England and the West Indian islands of Barbados, Antigua, Montserrat, Nevis and Jamaica. The Crown would hire the ships from Dummer at a fixed fee per ton and per month, and man, provision and arm them at royal expense. In the detailed account of his plan which he submitted provision was made for free carriage of the mail, and for a number of clauses for the protection of the ships and their crews, exemption of certain charges, and the right to have the proceeds from all passengers carried. The Lords of Trade strongly endorsed the advisability of such a mail service but suggested a few amendments to Dummer's plan. One of these was to include a separate service to the continental colonies with its terminus near the Delaware Capes (f-15). However, the contract in its final form did not contain a provision for packet service to the North American continent. On October 21, 1702 the first ship, the BRIDGEMAN, of Dummer's fleet sailed from Portsmouth to Barbados.

Though the thirteen colonies did not benefit directly from Dummer's transatlantic mail service, at least three of those, the Carolinas and Georgia, did indirectly, because there were numerous private vessels sailing between the islands and mainland ports, which formed the postal link. But nine other colonies remained without this overseas service.

For nine eventful years Dummer continued his West Indies line, using Falmouth and Plymouth as his home ports, with all the tenacity that was the hallmark of his personality. However, the odds were against him. He lost twelve ships out of the nineteen he built for this service. Hurricanes, privateers and enemy warships contributed to their doom. Financially the results of the venture were disastrous, and when on July 20, 1711, this mail service was closed officially Dummer faced bankruptcy. Two years later he died.

In spite of Dummer's failure, resulting in the southern colonies' loss of their communication with the home country, the experience attained was not wasted. It proved to be of considerable value in later years when new attempts were made to establish a transatlantic postal service.

Even during the Dummer experiment the British Treasury received several petitions from merchants on both sides of the Atlantic to provide them with a regular mail service, preferably between London and New York. The irregularity of private sailings from a variety of ports made it impossible to conduct the orderly scheduled contacts which the trade badly needed. However, the experience with the West Indies line and the maritime hazards in time of war made the Lords hesitant to meet the merchants' pleas.

(f-15) John Haskell Kemble: England's First Atlantic Mail Line. Mariner's Mirror, 1946. p. 37.

Nevertheless, the matter was too important to rule out any and all attempts to establish the desired contacts if these were offered in a form which would exclude risk to the Government.

In 1707 Sir Jeffrys proposed to the Queen "to make two Voyages thither (to New York) and back to the Isle of Wight in 6 or 7 (months) in case Your Majesty shall be pleased to constitute the said Vessell (the EAGLE, Capt Davison, Comdr.) with Your Majesty's Commission in the nature of a Packet boat." Sir Jeffrys offered it as an experiment "ofsettling and carrying on a Correspondence for those parts during the Warr without Charge to your Majesty." (f-16) Upon the insistance of one of the Commissioners of Trade it was decided to accept the proposal. The records are completely silent on the results of this experiment.

A few years later a broad side was printed in London and distributed in business circles, a copy of which is exhibited in figure F-15. It announced a forthcoming packet boat service between the British harbor town of Bristol and New York. William Warren, who was its originator, had submitted his plan to the Treasury late in 1709 and was granted a contract (f-17). The service was inaugurated in September 1710. John J. McCusker must be credited with a tabulation of Warren's sailings from and to Bristol which he published after a painstaking search of the maritime news in The Boston News-Letter. With the permission of the Postal History Journal the table is reprinted here (F-16). McCusker also illustrated his interesting article with the cover of a letter which may very well be the only Bristol Packet letter which has survived (F-17). There may have been others which were mailed during September, 1710 - October 14, 1712 period, such as the letter from Dorchester (Dorcetshire,Engl.) to Charlestown, Mass, written on Deecember 6, 1710 and shown in Part II, NY. 6. If those letters went via Bristol and were carried by Warren's packet boats they were not marked as such. By the end of 1712, or even earlier, this transatlantic mail service found its end for unknown reasons. It probably was unprofitable.

In his broad side of 1710 Warren referred to the interest Queen Anne had taken in the establishment of "a monthly Correspondence" between her kingdom and the dominions on the continent of America. It seems likely that his packet service was started in consequence of the act which bears the Queen's name and goes down into history as the most important piece of British postal legislation. For one thing it brought all overseas post offices under direct control of the General Post Office.

The preamble to this remarkable act makes it clear that her Majesty's interest in the postal services was focussed, at least to a considerable extent, on "the Revenue thereof", which was intended to be used "for the service of the War, and other of Her Majesty's Occasions." For the first time postage rates were fixed for the

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(f-16) Frank Staff: The Transatlantic Mail. (1956), p. 114.
(f-17) John J. McCusker: The New York City and the Bristol Packet. Postal History Journal, July, 1968. pp. 15-24.

K Great Brit. & I.
Post-Office

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Whereas the QUEEN has been pleaſed to direct, that a Monthly Correſpondence be Eſtabliſhed between this Kingdom, and Her Majeſties Dominions on the Continent of *AMERICA*, by Packet-Boats, to paſs to, and from *Briſtol* and *New-York*, between which laſt Place, and the ſeveral Provinces, Colonies, and Settlements of *New-England*, *Eaſt* and *Weſt-Jerſey*, *Penſilvania* and *Rhode-Iſland*, Regular Inland-Poſts are already Settled, and others are about to be ſettled, through *Maryland*, *Virginia*, *North* and *South-Carolina*, for the more Eaſie and Expeditious Conveyance of all Letters and Packets, which ſhall be Conveyed by means of the ſaid Packet-Boats.

THESE are therefore to give Notice thereof; and that ſhortly a prefix'd Time will be publiſhed, when Letters and Packets will be taken in at the General Poſt-Office, and at the ſeveral Poſt-Offices throughout *Great-Britain*, and *Ireland*, and a Day be appointed in each Month, when the Mails will be diſpatched from the General Poſt-Office for *Briſtol*, from whence the Packet-Boats are to take their Departure.

THE Rates for the Portage of Letters and Packets, to, and from the General Poſt-Office in *London* and *New-York*, being as follows.

	s.	d.
For every Single Letter, not exceeding one Sheet of Paper,	1	0
For every Double Letter, not exceeding two Sheets of Paper,	2	0
And in Proportion to the ſame Rates for every Packet of Letters.		
And for Packets of any kind of greater Weight, for every Ounce	4	0

THE PACKET-BOATS are to be of the Burthen of about Eighty Tonns, built on purpoſe for Sailing, of Strength to reſiſt the Seas, well Mann'd, and Commodiouſly Contrived for Entertaining Paſſengers, who will be kindly Received, and Entertained on Board, on Eaſie Terms.

THE ſaid PACKET-BOATS are permitted to carry out upon Freight, the Quantity of Five Tonns in Goods, and bring Home Ten Tonns, whereby all People may ſend ſmall Parcels to *New York*, or any other Place from thence by Land-Carriage, and be accommodated therein at Reaſonable Rates. As they may be more Particularly Informed by *William Warren*, Undertaker of the ſaid Packet-Boats, in *Crown-Court*, in *Gracious Street*, *London*,

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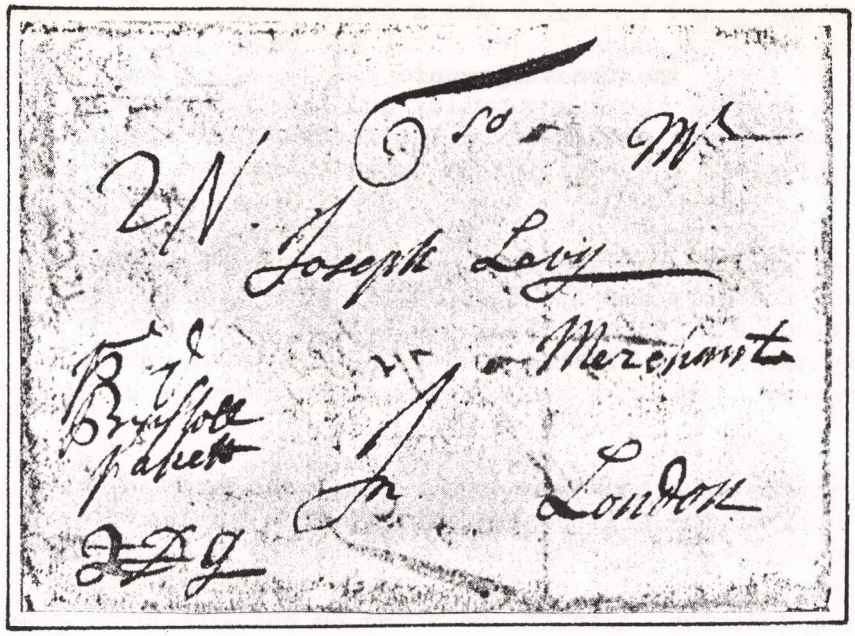
Printed by *J. Sowle*, in *White-hart-Court* in *Gracious-Street*.

(The British Museum)



F-16. New York, May, 1711, to London, June 14, per Bristol pakett. (John J. McCusker).

THE BRISTOL-NEW YORK PACKET, 1710-1713

Ship and Captain	Left Bristol	Arrived New York	Left New York	Arrived Bristol
Royal Anne John Shorter	[late September] 1710	[mid November]	[early December]	[early January] 1711
Bristol William Ball	28 December 1710	17 April 1711 [1]	7 May	[6 June]
Royal Anne John Shorter	9 March 1711	6 May	13 June	11 July
Harley John Palmer	14 July 1711	18 August	18 September	[18 October]
Harley Joseph Palmer	11 December 1711	29 March 1712 [2]	26 June	28 July
Edgley [3]	5 March 1712	3 May	[?]	[?]
Harley [4] Joseph Palmer	14 October 1712	30 December	[?]	[?]

F-17. Bristol Packet Sailing Schedule. (John J. McCusker).

overseas mail traffic, and other matters of a fiscal nature were taken care of as well. These subjects are more extensively discussed in the Chapter on Postage Rates.

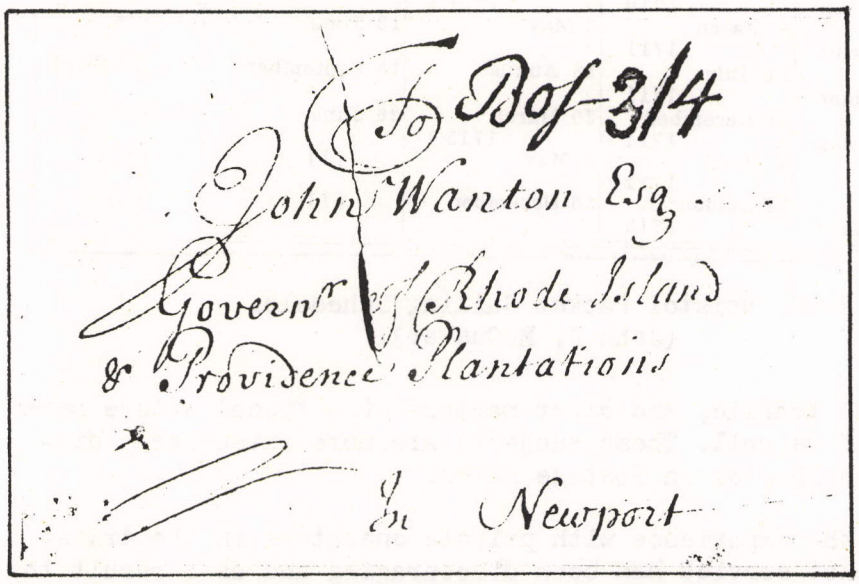
So far the experience with private operators in the transatlantic packet service had been discouraging and as a result the Postmasters General lost all interest in any further experiments of this sort for many years to come.

But the outbreak of war between England and France in 1744 ne-

cessitate the restoration of the packet service to the West Indies in order to safeguard the mail. Armed boats again carried letters and packages on this route (f-18) until the peace treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1749. The Treasury could not justify continuation of the service in view of the heavy outlay and the inadequate revenue. Whether any letters addressed to the American colonies reached their destination via the West Indies during this period is unknown.

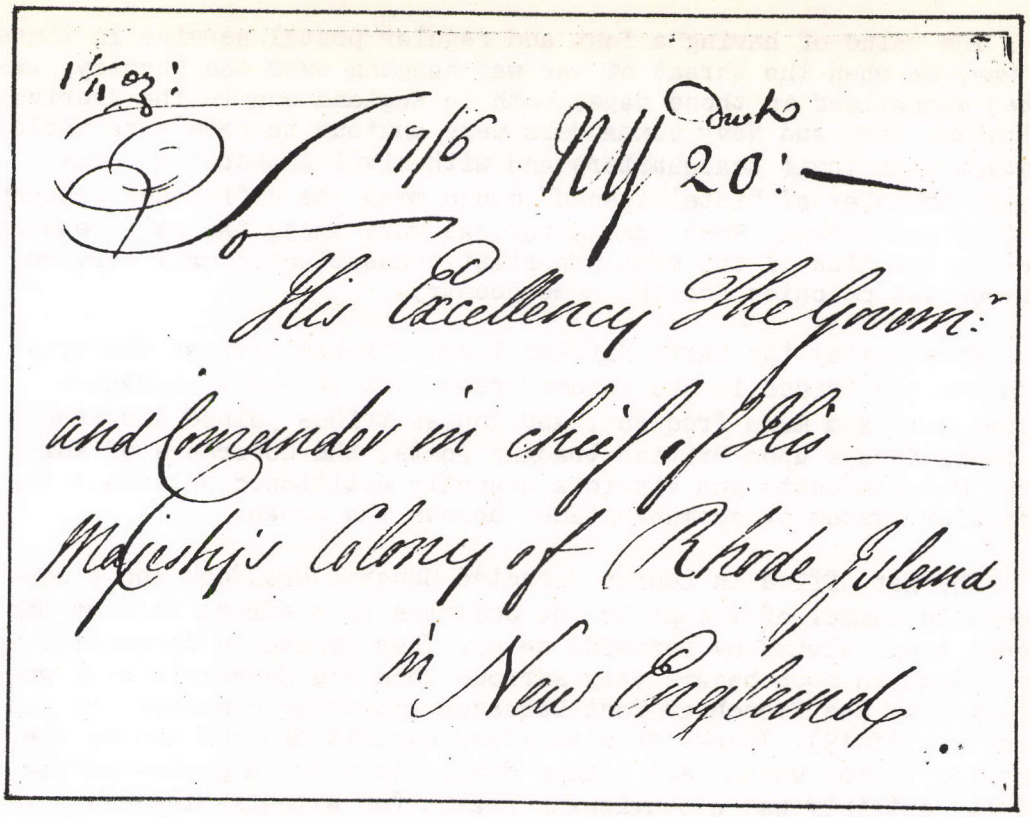
From 172 on, when Warren's Bristol packet services officially sanctioned by the Treasury and the Post Office were terminated, the mail between England and its colonies on the American continent were exclusively carried by British private ships, their captains, crews and passengers, until the year 1755 broight a change of major importance.

Numerous letters have been preserved which were written during the first half of the eighteenth century. From the many three covers have been selected for reproduction (F-18, 19 and 20). They represent incoming mail handled by the two main colonial ports of entry, New York and Boston. A third one shows an England-bound letter, which was sent from Beaufort in South Carolina, an important harbor in those days where many ships coming from the West Indies dropped anchor. Its date was October 21, 1740. The Bishop mark, which is clearly visible, shows the day of arrival in England: April 18, the next year. It would be incorrect to conclude that the ocean crossing took 179 days, because it is certain that considerable time was lost in waiting fo shipping connection in the West Indies. But that correspondence was slow is evidenced by the letter's contents which stated: "I received yours Dated July the 30th 1739 on the 7th of January 1739/40."

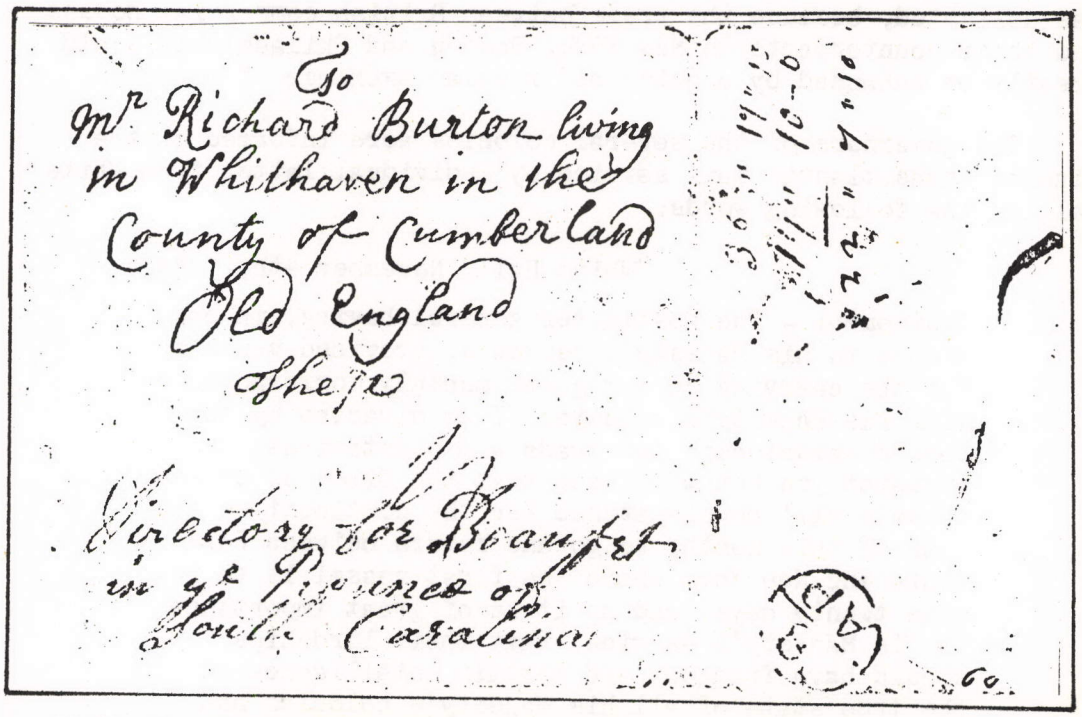


F-18. London, March 6, 1735. Double S(hip) letter to Newport via Bo(ston), Rate 3 sh. 4 d. (in Massachusetts Old Tenor bills). (Rhode Island State Archives).

(f-18) William Smith: History of the Post Office in British North America (1920), p. 32.



F-19. London, August 31, 1734, 1¼ oz. letter to Rhode Island (Newport), via N(ew) Y(ork). Rate 20 dwts., local currency 17 sh. 6 d. (Rhode Island State Archives).



F-20. Beaufort, S.C. October 21, 1740, to London, Bishop mark 18/AP(RIL), 1741. Rate 1 sh. (South Carolina Historical Society).

The value of having a fast and regular postal service in times of war, or when the threat of war was hanging over the country, was often emphasized in those days, both in England and in the American colonies. Army and Navy commanders were anxious to have a reliable contact with their headquarters and with civil authorities. The speedy transfer of "intelligence" could mean the difference between victory and defeat. Such considerations were among the main reasons for the creation of the most important transatlantic mail service between the colonies and the home country.

When during the early fifties local clashes between the British and the French in the border areas west of the Alleghanies became more and more frequent, and Indian tribes joined the French in their forays upon British trading posts, the Governors of New York, Massachusetts and Virginia urgently petitioned Whitehall for a regular system of communications across the ocean.

The War Office in London directed General Braddock and a considerable number of troops to the colonies in a effort to deny the French their claims by forceful means. They landed in Annapolis. The situation soon became very serious when His Majesty's army was defeated by the French at Fort Duquesne and their commander killed in action (f-19). Though this military exploit did not become the deciding factor which made London decide to start a packet service, it certainly was a convincing reason for establishing one.

According to the New York Mercury of January 12, 1756 the London newspapers carried the announcement which is depicted in figure F-21. The business world, to which this public notice was directed, was delighted, because the trade between British commercial houses and their counterparts in New York, Boston and Philadelphia would greatly be enhanced by a quick and regular exchange of messages.

The governors of the several colonies were informed of the planned transatlantic mail service by individual letter from White Hall in the following words:

"White Hall, November 4th, 1755.

> Gentlemen: - The postmaster general having, in obedience to His Majesty's commands, provided vessels for the carrying on a regular monthly correspondence with His Majesty's colonies, I am directed by the lord commissioners for trade and plantations, to acquaint you hetewith; and that the first of these vessels will be dispatched for the continent on the 15th of this month, to go and return between Falmouth and New York where the first vessel is to remain twenty days; and as it is of great importance to His Majesty's service, that their lordships should have frequent and certain intelligence of the true state of all His Majesty's colonies and plantations in America, their lordships desire that

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(f-19) See the Chapter on An Early American Army Post Office Letter.

Philadelphia, February 12, 1756.

GENERAL POST-OFFICE,

PUBLICK NOTICE is hereby given, That the firſt of the Pacquet Boats provided and eſtabliſhed, at *Falmouth*, in *England*, for carrying on a regular monthly Correſpondence between *Great-Britain* and his Majeſty's ſeveral Colonies on the Continent of *North-America*, arrived at *New-York*, on the third Inſtant, and will ſtay no longer than twenty Days, from that Time, unleſs his Majeſty's Service ſhould abſolutely require it.

Letters and Pacquets for *England*, or other Parts of *Europe*, will be taken in at the ſeveral *Poſt-Offices* on this Continent. Thoſe taken in at the Offices diſtant from *New-York*, will be forwarded thither by Poſt, and from thence to *London*, whence they will be ſent to the reſpective Places they are directed to.

The full Poſtage from *New-York* to *London*, of all Letters andPacquets ſent by the Packet Boats, muſt be paid at the Time they are put into the Poſt-Office, according to the Rates ſettled by Act of Parliament, *viz.* For a ſingle Letter, four Penny Weight of Silver, and ſo in Proportion for double and treble Letters, and for Pacquets. And all ſuch as are put into the ſeveral Poſt Offices on this Continent, diſtant from NewYork, muſt over and above the Rates paid from New-York to London, pay the full Inland Poſtage to New-York; without which they cannot be forwarded.

By Command of the Poſtmaſters-General,

WILLIAM FRANKLIN, Comptroller.

you will not fail of acquainteing them, by the return of every packet, with all public occurences which may happen in the colony under your government; and likewise transmit to their lordships all such public papers as are required to be transmitted.

I am, gentlemen, your most obedient humble servant,

John Pownall, Sec'ry," (f-20)

Some of the colonial governors may have second thoughts about the wisdom of having these new-fangled postal facilities.

The small, but very well protected, port of Falmouth on the English south coast was selected as the packet service's home base, and on the American side New York was to be the western terminal. On the basis of earlier transatlantic experiences, mainly to the West Indies, small brigs of 200 tons, privately owned, were chartered for thse monthly crossings, well armed and carrying a crew of thirty. In view of the ever existing hazards of piracy and the threat of foreign naval attacks these craft were considered the safest, because they could outsail the majority of their opponents on the high seas. Nevertheless the commanders received precise instructions what to do and what not to do in case of this kind of dangerous encounter. "You must run when you can, you must fight when you can no longer run, and when you can fight no more you must sink the mail before you strike."

These were no cargo ships, although occasionally some government supplies were carried. The mail was their main burden. Moreover they offered accomodation to a small number of official passengers.

Naturally expectations were high in England as well as on the American side, though no expression of such feelings is known to have survived. But whatever they may have been it is almost certain that many correspondents were sorely disappointed when the service started. According yo information from the General Post Office in Philadelphia, dated Frbuary 12, 1756, which appeared in the New York Mercury of February 16, the first packet mail, carried by the EARL OF HALLIFAX, arrived on February 3rd. Between the day of its closure in London and its delivery in New York eighty days had elapsed !

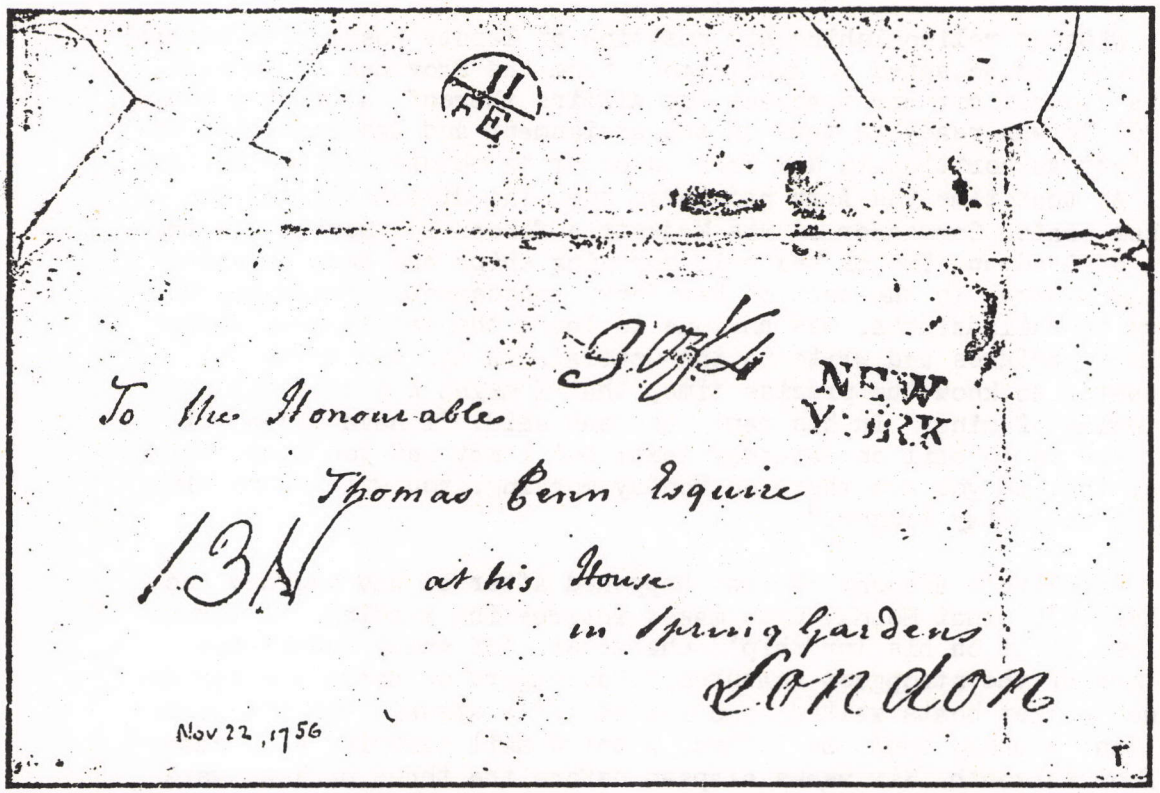
The schedule of departures called for the second packet mail to leave England on December 13th, 1755. However, the New York Mercury of April 26, 1756, carried the following announcement:

"Last Monday, the Ship Earl of Leicester, captain Ratford, arrived here in nine weeks from Falmouth, and brought the second and third Mails for the several Governments on this continent, the one being closed at the General Post-Office in London, on the 13th of December 1755, and the other at the same

place, the 10th day of January, 1756."

Consequently letters in the second mail under the new packet service plan were delivered in New York 128 days later. The sailing time of the EARL OF LEICESTER had been 63 days or very little better than the time it took the Reverend Mchaelius to travel from the Netherlands to the new world more than one century earlier. Taking in account all the "buts" and "ifs" an experienced sailor of those days may have been able to offer as an excuse for the slow movement of the mail, one can not speak of a great improvement.

A very early letter which crossed the Atlantic by packet is shown in figure F-22. It left New York on November 22, 1756 and



F-22. NEW/YORK, black, 24 x 12, November 22, 1756, to London, Bishop mark 11 FE(BRUARY), 1757 on reverse. 3 oz.¼, packet rate 13 shilling. Size reduced. (Edwin Mayer).

reached the British capital on February 11, the next year thus completing the postal voyage in 81 days. The New York postmaster marked the cover with a handstamp, a tool no other colonial post office had acquired so far. Though the exact date of its earliest usage is unknown and the immediate motive for handstamping letters lies in the dark it may very well be that the opening of the packet line was the stimulant for the introduction of the printed townmark. It will be noted that the piece of mail depicted in fi-

gure F-22 weighed 3¼ ounces, hence the high packet rate of 13 shillings.

The slow movement of the early packet mail was caused by inefficiencies inherent in its organizational structure and by an insufficient number of available vessels, the delays and cancellation of departures were mainly due to military decisions. The war with the French and numerous demands by army and navy commanders seriously interfered with a normal operation of the new transatlantic postal system. Whether the latter were valid justifications for these interruptions is questionable, particularly in view of the personal observations made by one of the passengers who was booked on a packet boat scheduled to sail from New York in February 1757. This passenger was no other than Benjamin Franklin.

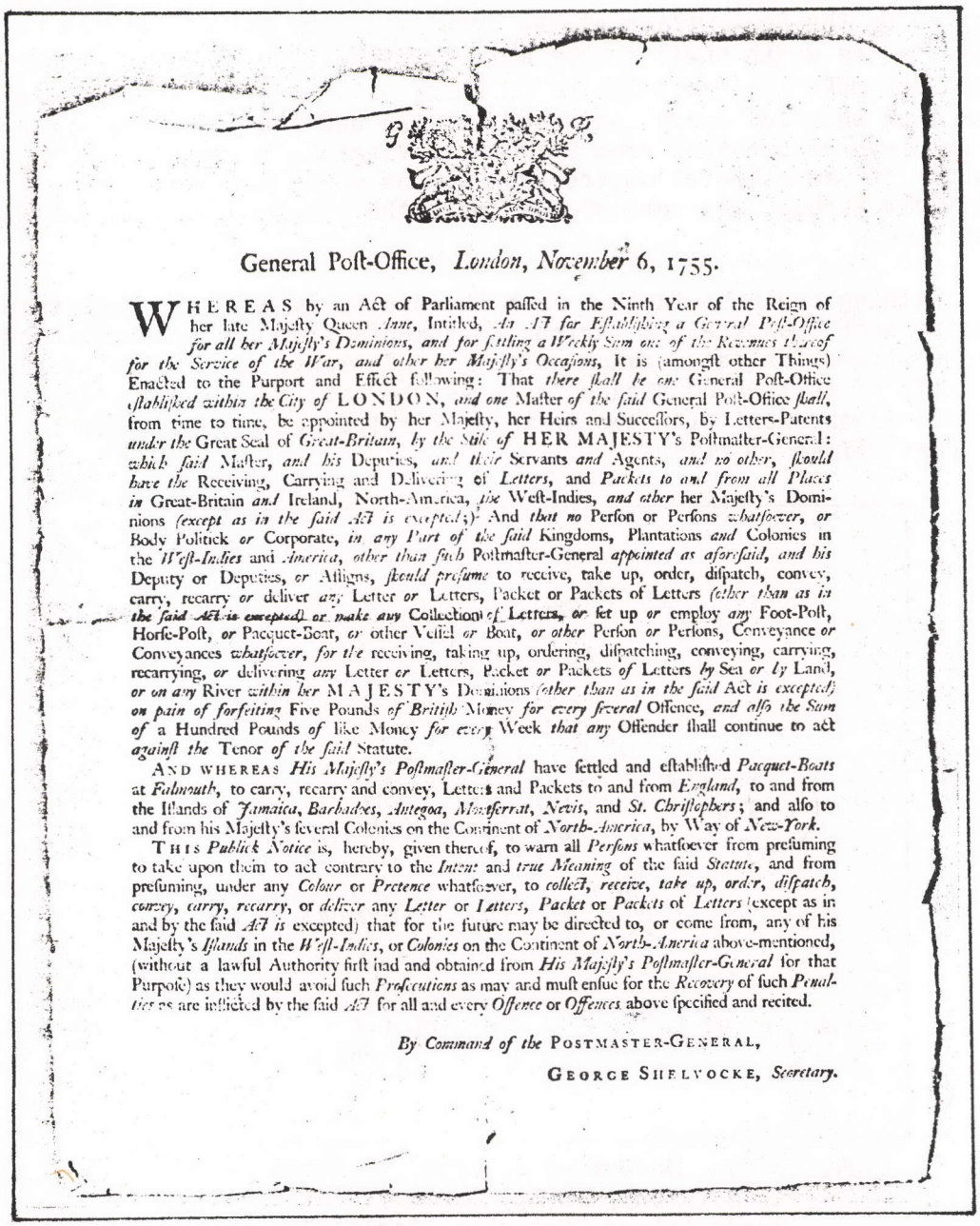
Without relinquishing his position of Deputy Postmaster General Franklin had accepted an appointment from the Province of Pennsylvania "to solicit and transact the Affairs thereof in Great Britain". (f-20) He was ready to take up the assignment and had contacted the military authorities in New York in order to obtain passage to London. At that time the Army had taken over the dispatching of the packet boats. Commander of His Majesty's forces in America was the Earl of Loudoun. Two of the mail carrying ships had been detained by the General in the port of New York, consequently Franklin, who lived in Philadelphia, was anxious to learn the latest news about their departures and write to the General. In his own words: "I requested to know the precise time, that I might not miss her by any delay of mine." In his reply Loudoun said: "I have given out that she is to sail on Saturday next; but I may let you know, entre nous, that if you are there on Monday morning, you will be in time, but do not delay longer."

Franklin's account of what happened after he had boarded the GENERAL WALL that Monday noon makes interesting reading. It throws a harsh light on his lordship's character, "of which indecision was one of the strongest features." Passengers on board the two detained packet boats waited, and waited for a signal from the General that anchors could be lifted. A third mail carrying ship came in from Falmouth. Six weeks elapsed before the three packets were ordered to join the men=of-war at Sandy Hook. "At length the fleet sail'd, the General and all his army on board, bound to Louisburg (Nova Scotia), with intent to besiege and take that fortress; all the packet boats in company were ordered to attend the General's ship, ready to receive his dispatches when these should be ready. We were out five days before we got a letter with leave to part and then out ship quitted the fleet and steerd for England." It is no wonder that the demurrage charges were greater than the contract payments during the early years of the transatlantic packet service. However, with the capture of Canada from the French military interference with the normal operation of the packets declined, and when the war was over the Post Office had a better chance to improve its services between England and America. Nevertheless it took time before it could satisfy its customers.

(f-20) Ruth L. Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928), p. 69.

Even at the end of its first decade of operation a letter from London to New York needed 70 days to cross the ocean. (F-23) Part of the delay was due to the fact that writers did not observe the sailing dates of the ships.

From the very beginning of the packet service the General Post Office in London was determined to maintain its monopoly. On November 6, 1755 George Shelvocke on behalf of the Postmaster General published an announcement which emphasized "that no Person of Persons whatsoever, or Body Politick or Corporate ... should presume to receive,



General Post-Office, *London, November* 6, 1755.

WHEREAS by an Act of Parliament paſſed in the Ninth Year of the Reign of her late Majeſty Queen *Anne*, Intitled, *An Act for Eſtabliſhing a General Poſt-Office for all her Majeſty's Dominions, and for ſettling a Weekly Sum out of the Revenues thereof for the Service of the War, and other her Majeſty's Occaſions*, It is (amongſt other Things) Enacted to the Purport and Effect following: That *there ſhall be one* General Poſt-Office *eſtabliſhed within the City of* LONDON, *and one* Maſter *of the ſaid* General Poſt-Office *ſhall*, from time to time, be appointed by her Majeſty, her Heirs and Succeſſors, by Letters-Patents *under the* Great Seal of *Great-Britain, by the Stile of* HER MAJESTY's Poſtmaſter-General: *which ſaid* Maſter, *and his* Deputies, *and their* Servants *and* Agents, *and no other, ſhould have the* Receiving, Carrying and Delivering of *Letters*, and *Packets to and from all Places in* Great-Britain *and* Ireland, North-America, *the* Weſt-Indies, *and other* her Majeſty's Dominions *(except as in the ſaid Act is excepted)*: And *that no* Perſon or Perſons *whatſoever, or* Body Politick *or* Corporate, *in any Part of the ſaid* Kingdoms, Plantations *and* Colonies in the *Weſt-Indies* and *America, other than ſuch* Poſtmaſter-General *appointed as aforeſaid, and his* Deputy or Deputies, *or* Aſſigns, *ſhould preſume* to receive, take up, order, diſpatch, convey, carry, recarry *or* deliver *any* Letter *or* Letters, Packet or Packets of Letters *(other than as in the ſaid Act is excepted) or make any* Collection of Letters, *or* ſet up *or* employ *any* Foot-Poſt, Horſe-Poſt, *or* Pacquet-Boat, *or* other Veſſel *or* Boat, *or other* Perſon *or* Perſons, Conveyance *or* Conveyances *whatſoever, for the* receiving, taking up, ordering, diſpatching, conveying, carrying, recarrying, *or* delivering *any* Letter *or* Letters, Packet *or* Packets *of* Letters *by* Sea *or by* Land, *or on any* River *within her* MAJESTY's Dominions *(other than as in the ſaid* Act *is excepted) on pain of forfeiting* Five Pounds *of Britiſh* Money *for every ſeveral* Offence, *and alſo the Sum of* a Hundred Pounds *of* like Money *for every* Week *that any* Offender ſhall continue to act *againſt the* Tenor *of the ſaid* Statute.

AND WHEREAS *His Majeſty's Poſtmaſter-General* have ſettled and eſtabliſhed *Pacquet-Boats* at *Falmouth*, to carry, recarry and convey, Letters and Packets to and from *England*, to and from the Iſlands of *Jamaica, Barbadoes, Antegoa, Montſerrat, Nevis*, and *St. Chriſtophers*; and alſo to and from his Majeſty's ſeveral Colonies on the Continent of *North-America*, by Way of *New-York*.

THIS *Publick Notice* is, hereby, given thereof, to warn all *Perſons* whatſoever from preſuming to take upon them to act contrary to the *Intent* and *true Meaning* of the ſaid *Statute*, and from preſuming, under any *Colour* or *Pretence* whatſoever, to *collect, receive, take up, order, diſpatch, convey, carry, recarry*, or *deliver* any *Letter* or *Letters, Packet* or *Packets* of *Letters* (except as in and by the ſaid *Act is* excepted) that for the future may be directed to, or come from, any of his Majeſty's *Iſlands* in the *Weſt-Indies*, or *Colonies* on the Continent of *North-America* above-mentioned, (without a lawful Authority firſt had and obtained from *His Majeſty's Poſtmaſter-General* for that Purpoſe) as they would avoid ſuch *Proſecutions* as may and muſt enſue for the *Recovery* of ſuch *Penalties* as are inflicted by the ſaid *Act* for all and every *Offence* or *Offences* above ſpecified and recited.

By Command of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL,

GEORGE SHELVOCKE, *Secretary.*

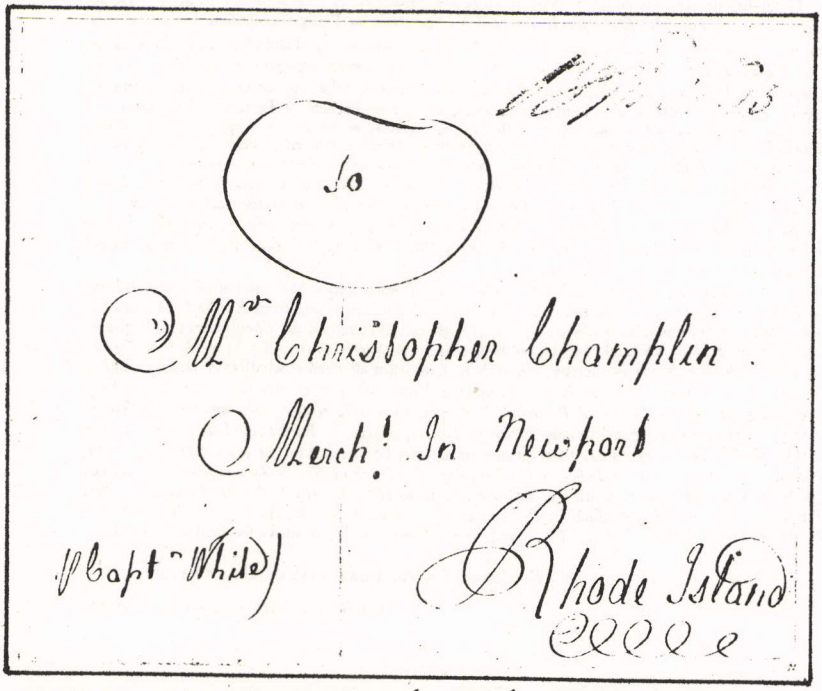
F-23. Public Statement of Britain's Postal Monopoly. (Newport Historical Society).

take up, order, dispatch, convey, carry, recarry or deliver any Letter or Letters ... on pain of forfeiting Five Pounds of British Money for every several Offence, and also the Sum of a Hundred Pounds of like Money for every Week that any Offender shall continue to act against the Tenor of the said Statute."

The only exception to this very strict-sounding regulation was the so-called "exempt" letter, the cover which enclosed shipping papers or other documents related to the goods which were transported by the same carrier.

It is logical to expect that this kind of a policy officially adopted by the Post Office at the opening of the packet service would be the death knell to the mail carrying private ships, and therefore make the "ship letter" a thing of the past. It would also mean that each and every letter of British and European origin qith an American destination from Suffolk in Virginia to the northern reaches of the colonial empire from now on would have to enter exclusively through the port of New York, the terminal of the packet boat line.

Nothing could be further from the truth. As Allen W. Robertson pointed out: "Despite the various enactments from 1660 onwards, and the penalties for the evasion of the regulations, by far the greater majority of letters continued to leave the country 'illegaly' by private arrangement with the masters of ships, with no benefit to the Post Office (f-21)".



F-24. London, September 6, 1756, to Rhode Island, via Bo(ston), Sh(ip) letter, 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

(f-21) Alan W. Robertson: The Maritime Postal History of London. (London, 1960), p. 47.

The printer's ink on the November 6, 1755 broad side was hardly dry when shippers and postmasters alike ignored the Post Office decree and accepted and processed ship letters as they had always done in the past. Figure F-24 shows such a letter written in the British capital in September 1756. It was conveyed by a private ship to Newport, R.I. However, it would seem that letters with a New York destination formed a distinct exception, because numerous packet letters have turned up which were addressed to that city and were mailed during the ensueing years, whereas the first ship letter to New York that has been found by the author was dated Liverpool, October 30, 1767, or twelve years after the decree was issued.

Almost twenty years after its inception the flow of packet letters to America took a new course, and shortly thereafter was stopped completely. Political developments on this side of the Antlantic interfered with the regular operation of the service.

It began with the Boston situation. The British were taking severe punitive measures in a city which sizzled with indignation and rebelious sentiment. Army units and Navy vessels in increasing numbers were sent to the city and its harbor was closed. Commerce was at a standstill.

The Maryland Gazette of November 27, 1774 printed a message from New York which read as follows:

> "The packet which arrived at New York from Falmouth, on Friday the 28th ult. is the last, we are informed, that is to be sent to that port (New York), government having ordered them (the packet boats), for the future, to his Excellency, the Commander in Chief, at Boston."

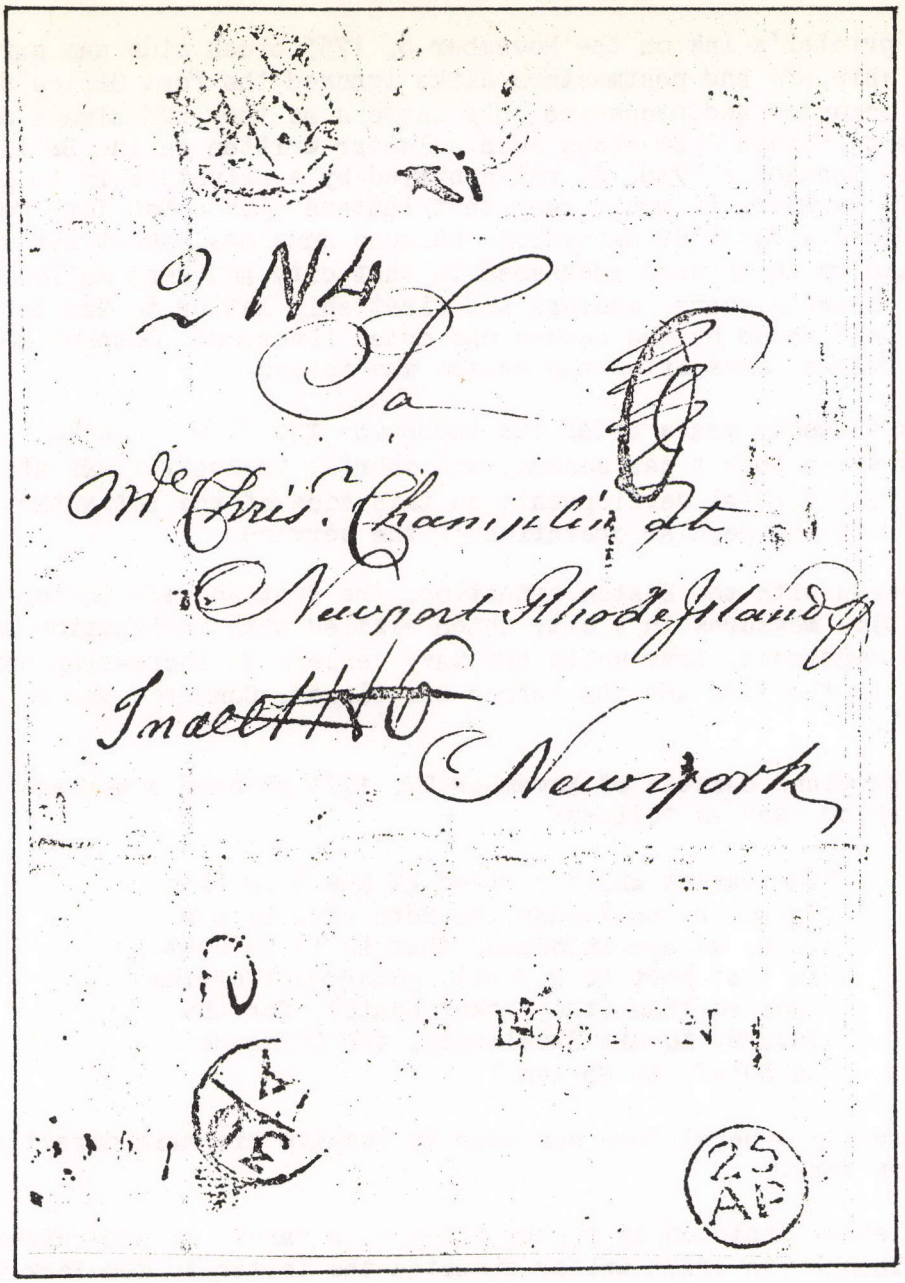
Apparently General Gage had need to receive his mail directly and not via New York.

The letter depicted in figure F-24a is a sample of this diverted service. Though its Irish writer directed the letter to New York it went to Boston as evidenced by the British occupation town mark on the reverse of the cover. (f-22)

But history making events happened at a rapidly increasing rate. Soon the packet boats' new terminal of Boston had to be discontinued and its predecessor, New York, too. The London newspapers in their issue of September 28th, 1775, carried the following announcement:

> "A mail will be dispatched from hence on Wedesday next for NewYork; and also one for Charlestown; after which there will be no regular conveyance for letters from this office to North-America;

(f-22)See Part II, Explanatory Notes on the Boston "occupation townmark".



F-24a. Dublin, Ireland, Bishop mark JA(NUARY)/25, 1775, via London, Bishop mark 30/IA(NUARY), and BOSTON, red, 27½ x 4½, Bishop mark 25/AP(RIL), all on reverse, to Newport, R.I. during British occupation of Boston. British inland rate 6d. In all 1 shilling, 6 pence, obliterated in Newport and rerated 2 shill., 4 pence local currency. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

but whenever a packet may be dispatched to any part of the continent, proper notice will be given." (f-23)

(f-23) The Providence Gazette, January 13, 1776.

The transatlantic packet boats were withdrawn from general office duty, armed as for war, and placed at the orders of the war office (f-24). Whatever mail for America came through was delivered to John Antill on board H.M.KING FISHER. Because of a postal revolution on Mahhattan the British postmaster had been forced to close his office there on Christmas Day, 1775. (See Chapter T).

The last shipment of outgoing mail that was processed by the New York post office is represented here by a cover exhibited in figure F-25. Coming from upstate New York it was dated May 3, 1775, and carried a handstamped imprint that was characteristic for the short operating period of the provisional congressional postal system. With this letter an important chapter of New York's postal history came to a close, and for all of colonial America for that matter.

For a period of 7½ years, duting which New York was in the hands of the British forces of occupation, the packet mail service was maintained as well as possible under the circumstances by the Royal Navy. Well-armed boats varried the mail vice-versa. Very little is known about the results of this operation, but from the fact that 40 British post office packet boats were lost during the war one would conclude that the service was far from successful. It has been reported that during the period of May 1778 though February 1781 official letters from London to New York needed from 2 to 7 months to reach their destinations (f-25).

The postmasters general in London were well aware of the insufficiencies of the wartime postal service operating between the home country and the North-American continent. Canadian merchants complained bitterly and so did official and private correspondents in New York.

On February 17, 1779 a letter went out from the General Post Office to Lord George Germain, the Secretary for the Colonies, in which his Lordship was informed of the difficulaties encountered in handling the transatlantic mail at the American end.

> "... The more we reflect upon the Inconveniences which have been occasioned both at New York and at Quebec by the Mails being carried to, opened and detained by the Commanders in Chief, the more we are convinced that neither the Commanders themselves, the Officers of the Army and Navy, nor the Community at large, are so well served as they would be if the Mails were regularly delivered, as they most certainly ought, to our Deputies General, whose immediate Duty it is, at all times, to afford the greatest facility to Correspondence by sorting and distributing without the loss of a moment the Letters and Dispatches for the Commanders in Chief of His Majesty's Army & Navy in the first place, and to all other persons public and private, and by these means all Parties would be better accomodated and the

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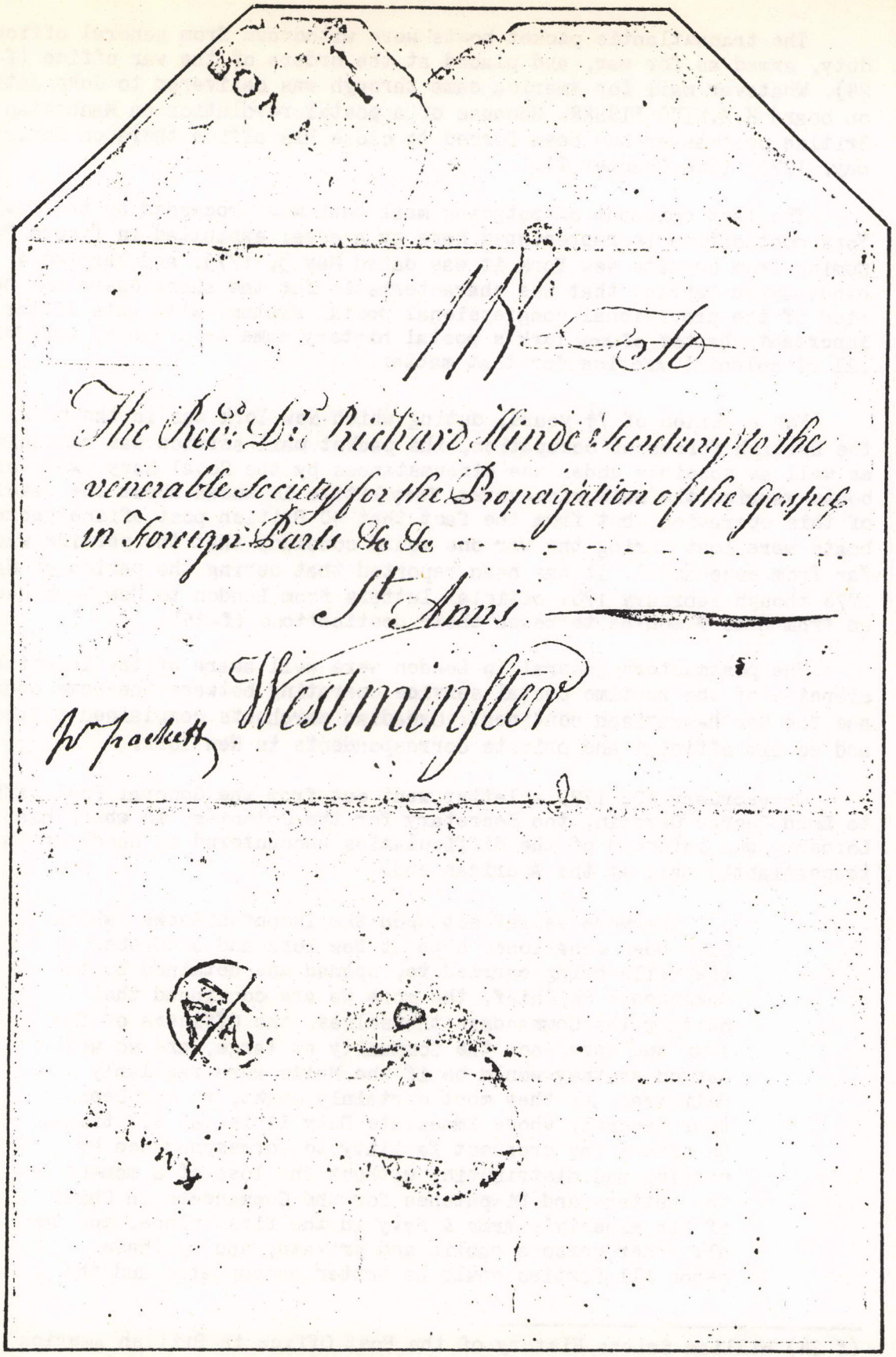
(f-24) William Smith: History of the Post Office in British America (1920). p. 67.

(f-25) Pier Mackasy: The War for America, 1775-1783. (Cambridge, 1964). p. 73.



F-25. N(EW) YORK, red, 27 x 4½, MAY 3, 1775, packet letter to Westminster, Engl. Bishop mark 12/IV(NE), all on reverse. Rate 1 shilling. (Siegel Auction).

Postage secured to this Reveue.

We therefore most earnestky intreat your Lordship would be pleased to write by the next Month's Mail to the Governors & Commanders in Chief in America to suffer the Mails to be carried to the Post Offices in due Course, and to lend every Support and Assistance to our Deputies in the Execution of their Duty etc. We on our part will give the strongest Injunction to our Deputies to exert their utmost Endeavour to accomodate the Commanders in Chief both by Land and Sea as well as the Officers and Men of the Army and Navy in the most expeditious & careful Manner.

We are & & &

Le Despencer
H.F. Carteret."

Rebel wartime postal traffic established its own corridors accross the Atlantic. Private messages went via Holland, Bermuda and the West Indies. Americans who happened to be in England when the war started kept contact with their relatives and friends at home despite discontinued packet services and patroling war-ships. One of these letters gives the impression that an information center in London provided prospective writers with details about lanes of communication which were open to them. "I was informed this evening of a vessel going to Bermuda," wrote one of them from London. In an article in the American Philatelist (f-26) this author has described the role which the Netherlands and the Dutch possessions in the West Indies played in this wartime postal traffice, a role which was roughly interfered with by Admiral George Rodney when he captured and sacked the island of St. Euatatius (Statia).

In a letter, dated July 31, 1775, Jonathan Trumbull, the Governor of Connecticut, wrote to his son Joseph, who at the time was Commissary General of the American Army at Cambridge:

"Capt. David Mumford is just arrived from the West Indies, and tells me that the Macaroni sloop sent for Powder was arrived, and he makes no doubt but he will arrive here in ten Days with a large Quantity. Mumford says the merchants in St Eustatius are much our Friends, and that we shall soon have Powder Enough ..."

The quoted part of the letter explains why the postal traffic via the Dutch West Indies was of such importance to the American cause. During the early days of the revolution the Committees of Secret Correspondence, which were destined to become the American Department of State, had among other things the task of establishing and continuing

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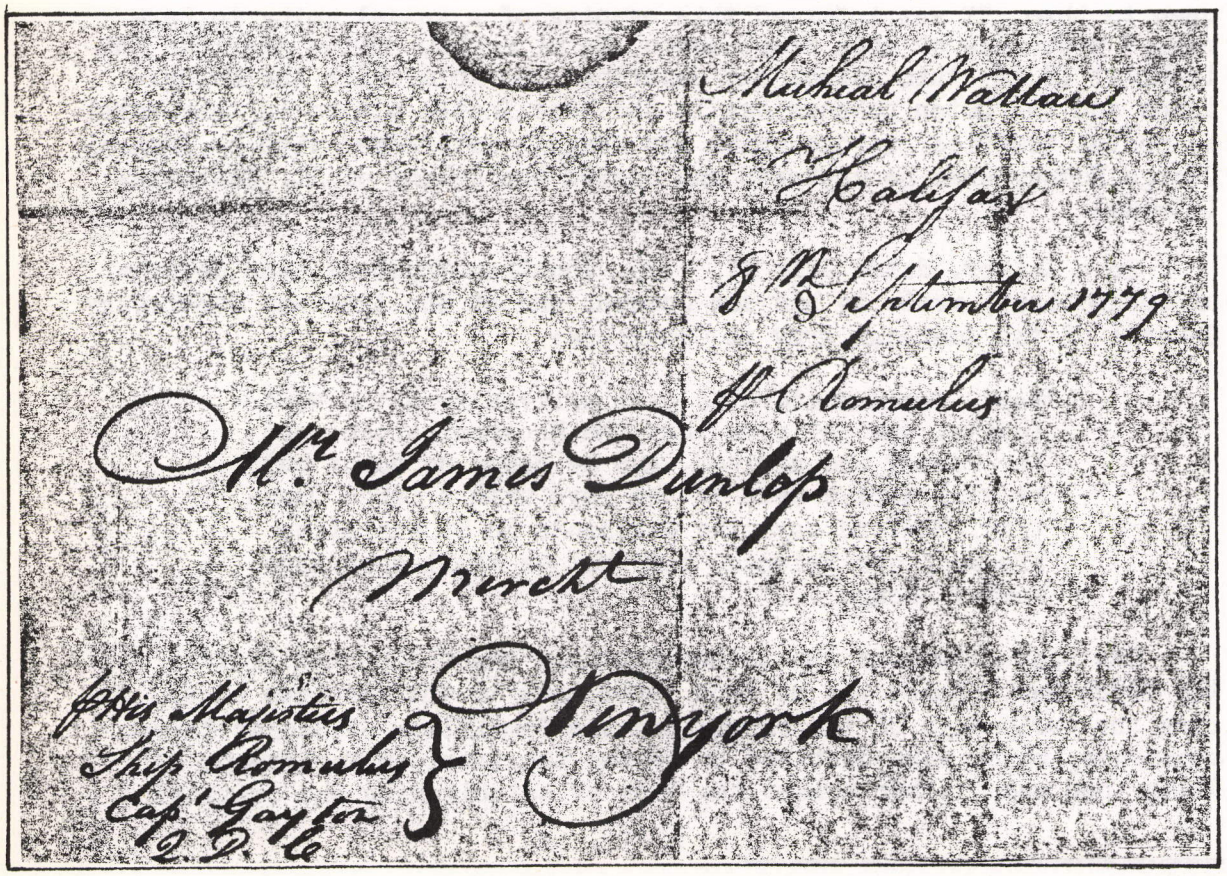
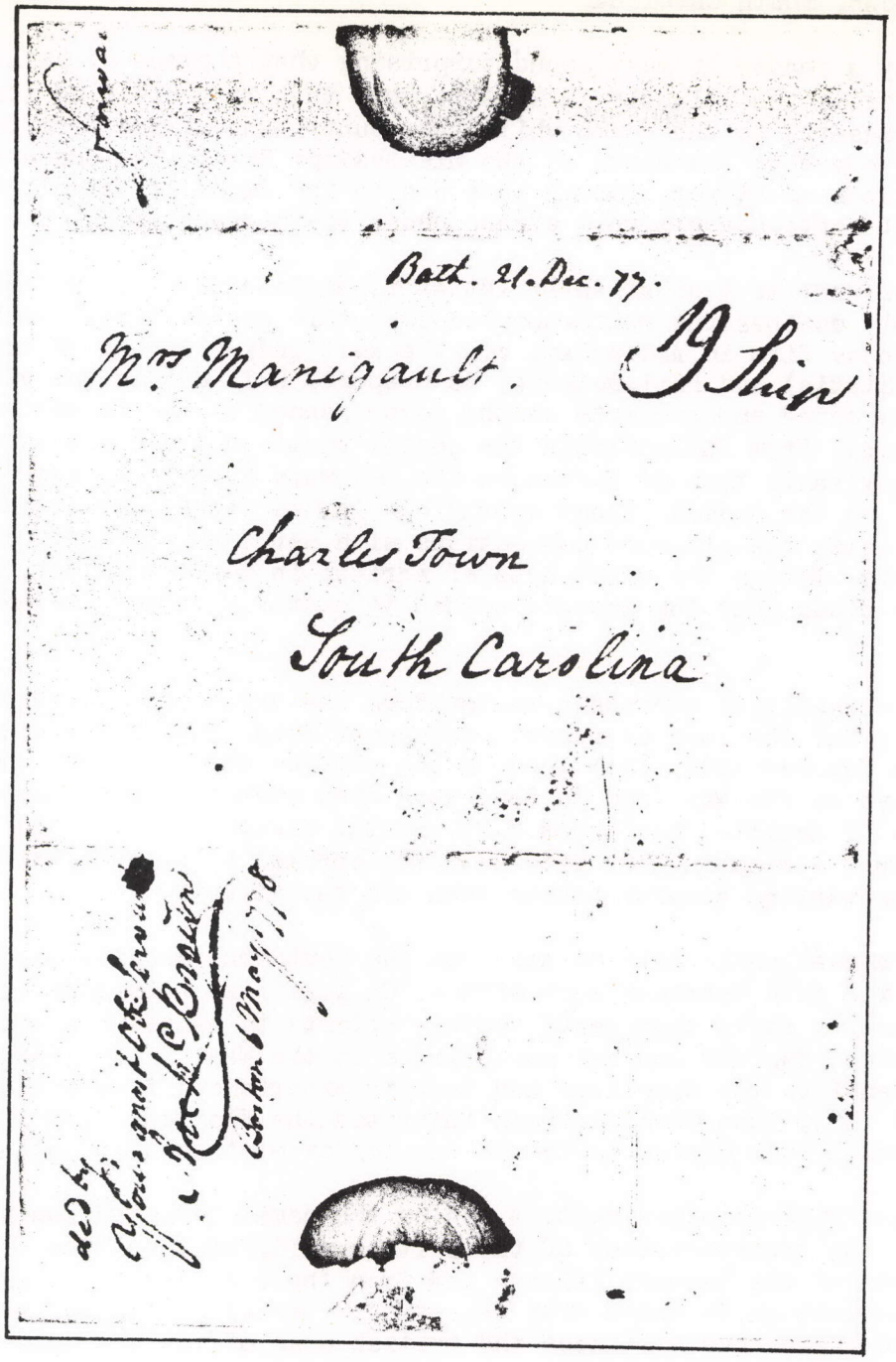
(f-26) Alex.L.ter Braake: Early Mail from the Netherlands West Indies. The American Philatelist, November, 1972. pp. 973-992.

letter contacts with friendly nations, France, the Netherlands, Spain, and even with trustworthy individuals in England. It became necessary to have loyal agents abroad, who could serve as intermediaries for this very important correspondence. Of exceptional value to the American cause was the uninterrupted written contact between Philadelphia and the Chateau de Chaumont in Passy from where Benjamin Franklin abd his colleagues operated on behalf of the Confederated Colonies. A small fleet of American privateers carried this deplomatic mail back and forth together with valuable cargo.

Of course the letter just quoted from was written during the very early days of the struggle, but even when the fighting was at its heaviest and the war at sea was fought without compassion some private correspondence found its was across the Atlantic. During the relatively short periods that Boston, Philadelphia and Charlestown, in addition to New York, were in British hands, letters from Europe to America in revolt came through. The ships that carried them were protected by the Royal Navy. A few examples are shown in figure MA 5 (Part II) and figure F-26. The latter message was carried from Halifax in Nova Scotia to New York by a British warship. Of special interest is a letter from St. Augustine to New York (Part II, FLA 3), whic needed 11 months for its delivery to the addressee. Unfortunately no clues have been found to determine whether it was shipped along the Atlantic coast, or whether it first went to England and was forwarded from there to New York.



F-26. Halifax - Nova Scotia, September 8, 1779, per His Majesties Shp ROMULUS, to New York. (Library of Congress).



F-27. Bath, December 21, 1777, shipletter via a Boston forwarder, May 6, 1778, to Charlestown, S.C. Rated 19 dwts. (The South Caroliniana Library).

The letter portrayed on this page was written in Bath, England, on December 21st, 1777, and reached Boston on May the 6th next year, in spite of the war. There a forwarder sent it on to its addressee

in Charlestown, South Carolina.

To many a reader it must sound surprising that a piece of mail not only could cross the Atlantic in wartime, but that it could find its way from Massachusetts to the south while the country was aflame from the eastern sea board to the banks of the Mississippi River. The postage of 19 pennyweights of silver, though high due to the first inflated rates (f-27), most certainly was well earned under the circumstances.

Another wartime transatlantic letter is depicted in figure F-28, which clearly defines the round-about course this piece of mail took from a business firm in Amsterdam, via the West Indies island of St. Eustatius (Statia) and Philadelphia, to Newport, R.I. during the winter of 1776. The dated endorsements on the cover penned by the forwarders tell the story. From Philadelphia the postal route to the north passed by the Pennsylvania town of Easton on the Delaware River, and from there to Fishkill on the Hudson. Enemy operations in New Jersey prevented the posts from using the old road connections with New York, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Though the exact date of arrival in Newport is not in evidence it is clear that the message needed 5½ months to reach the addressee.

After Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown the war on land slackened considerably but the loss of packet boats continued. The last one was captured in October 1782. From then on the chances that a letter would safely arrive on its way from England were much better. One of these later letters is depicted in figure F-29. Postal history material on file indicates that correspondence with Scotland carried by private vessels survived the wartime hazards better than the packet mail.

The trans-atlantic mail to and from the southern colonies used Charlestown as its main terminal post office. On page F-24 reference has been made to Dummer's early eighteenth century efforts to maintain a postal service between England and her possessions in the West Indies, and to the small benefits the Carolinas and Georgia experienced from his efforts. Not before 1763, when Great Britain inherited the Floridas from Spain did the General Post Office in London any improvement to that situation.

It began with an experiment. A man by the name of Edward Lewis contracted for the transportation of the British mail, sailing from Falmouth to some of the Leeward Islands and from there to Jamaica, Pensacola and Charlestown.It ended with this single test-run. It had proved that despite tremendous distances the British post office was able to serve the West Indies and the southern colonies on the American mainland. This in 1765 it was decided by the postmasters general, supported by the Treasury, to start a regular mail service. The first ship, the SNOW SUFFOLK sailed from Falmouth and arrived in Charlestown with the mail from Europe and the West Indies on May 22 that year.

During the first two years of these packet boat services three voyages were made annually. However, a rapid growing demand from the business world caused the post office to extend the operation. Throughout

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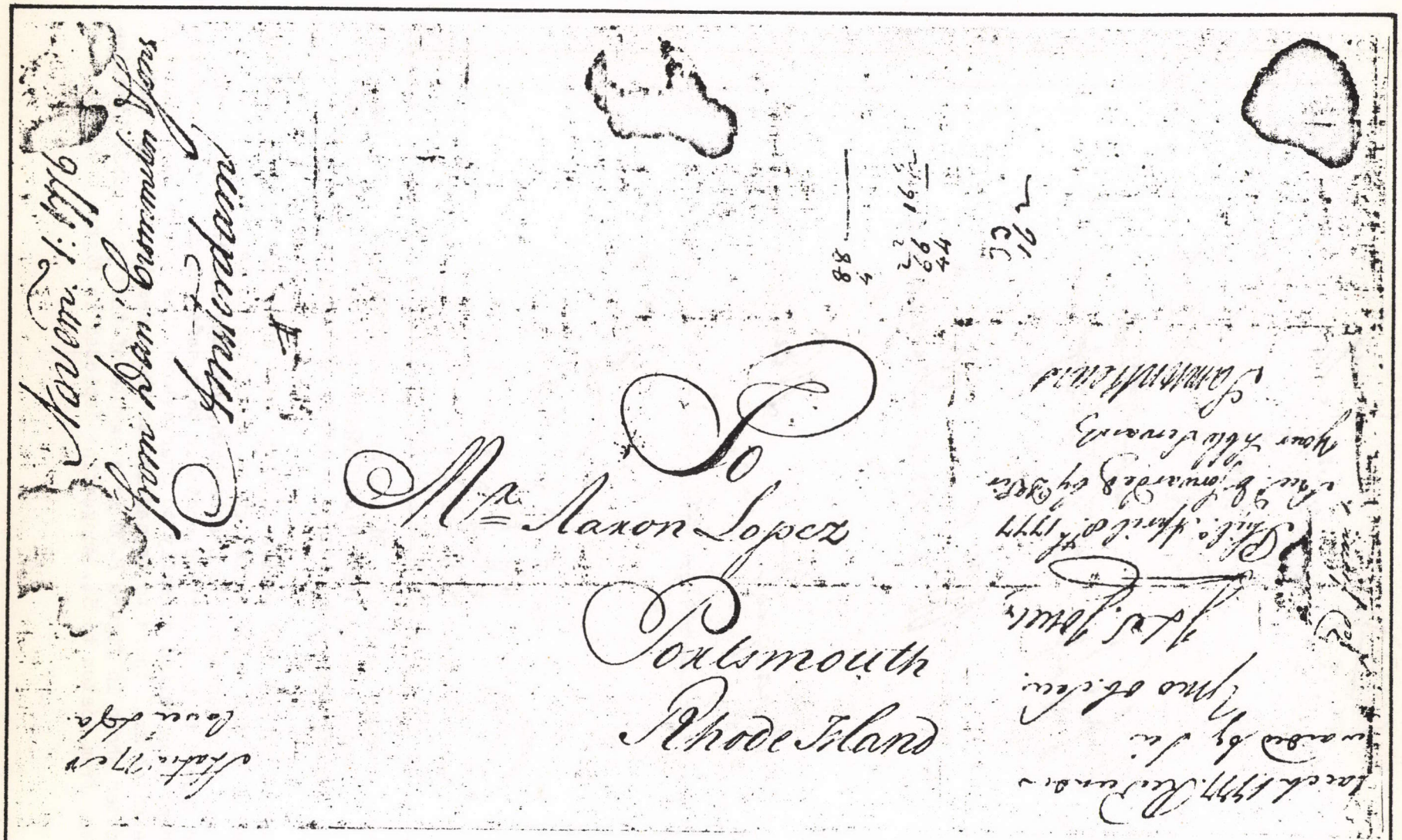
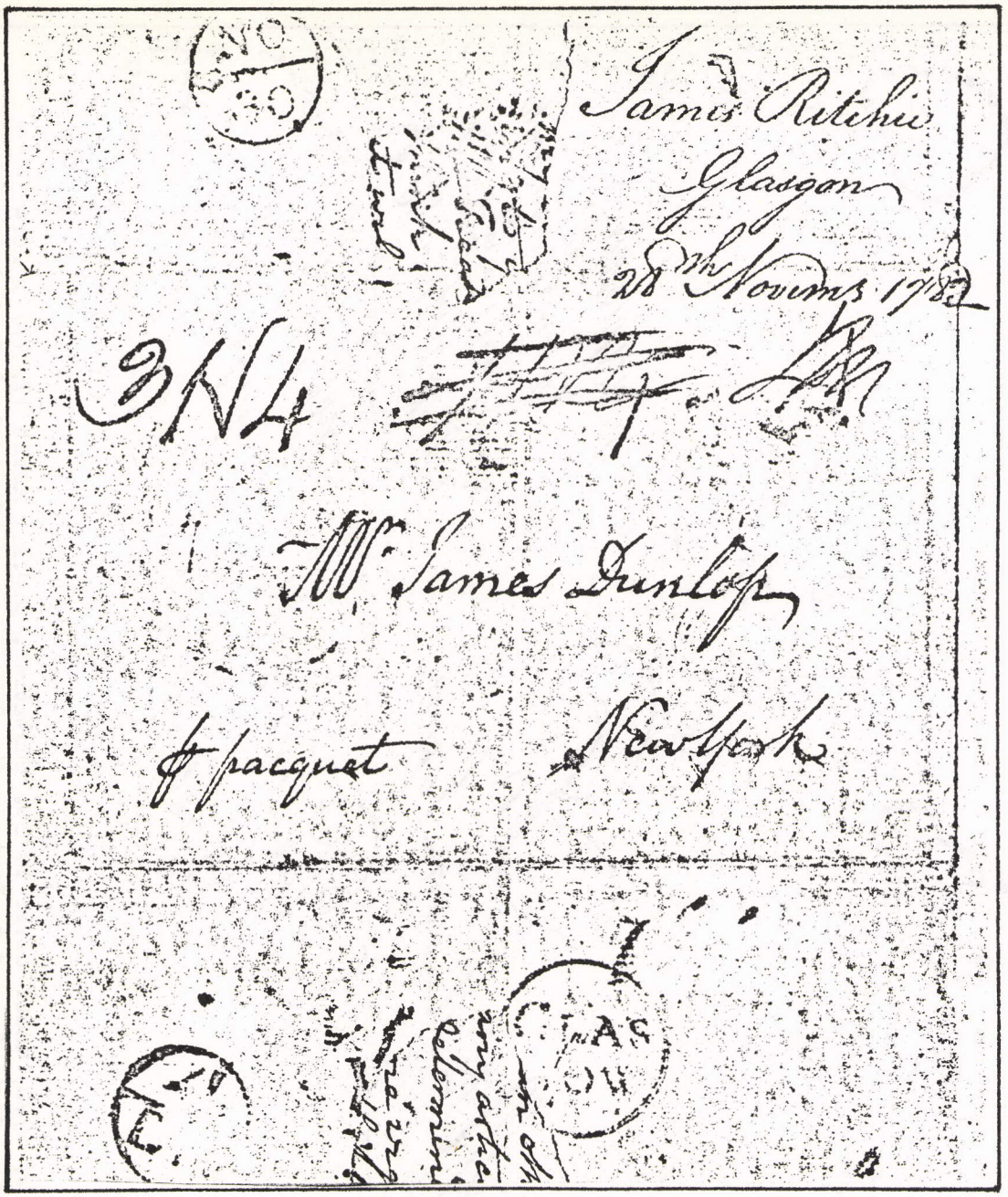
(f-27) See the Chapter on Rates of Postage.

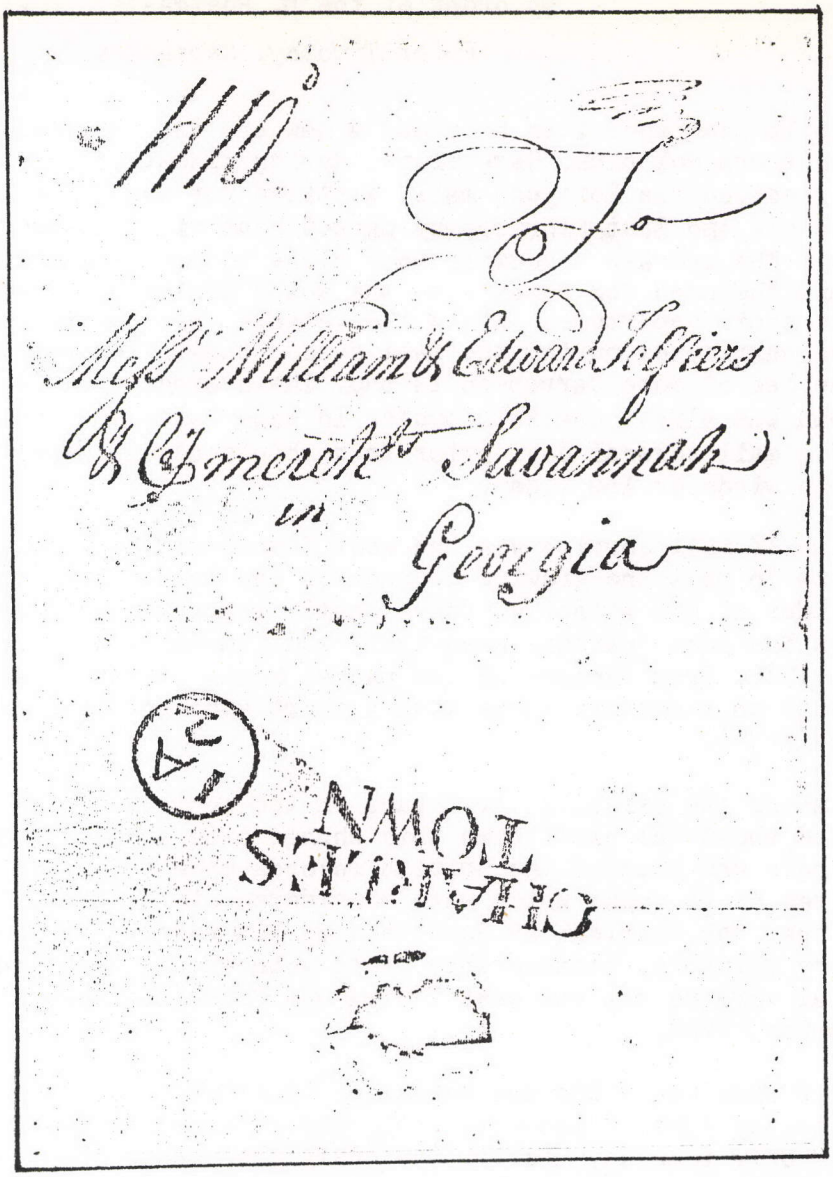


F-28. Amsterdam, November 1, 1776, under cover to St. Eustatius, D.W.I., March 17, 1777, forwarded to Philadelphia, April 5, and to Portsmouth, R.I. (Newport Historical Society).



F-29. Glasgow in circle, Bishop mark NO(VEMBER)/30, 1782, via London, Bishop mark 4/DE(CEMBER), all on reverse, to New York. Rate 3 shillings, 4 pence. (Library of Congress).

the years 1767 and 1768 twelve sailings were undertaken alltogether. In the beginning the boats called at St. Augustine in East Florida on their way from Pensacola to Charlestown, but the bar in front of the harbor proved to be a serious obstacle to a safe entrance. Consequently the ships soon sailed directly to Charlestown, leaving the St. Augustine and Savannah mail there to be carried to those destinations by land. The letter shown in figure F-30 is a sample of that procedure. Likewise a letter from Boston to St. Ausgustine depicted in figure Q-7.



F-30. Greenock, Scotland, October 23, 1774, to Savannah, via CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, Bishop mark IA(NUARY)/2, all on reverse. Rated 1 shilling, 10 pence. (Duke University Library).

The South Carolina Gazette, of January 5, 1769, carried the following announcement:

"General Post Office, Dec. 31, 1768

Notice is hereby given that the mail for Great Britain, to go by LE DISPENSER Packet Boat, Capt. William Talbott, will be made up at this office on Wednesday the 17th of January instant, and on the third Wednesday in every month after.

By order of the D. Postmaster General
Peter Timothy, Secretary."

This simple newspaper item heralded a new era for the postal services of the southern colonies. Heretofore, during almost four years, Charlestwon had received the European mail, destined for South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia and East Florida, by packet boat via the West Indies and Pensacola. The average roundtrip took close to seven months. Weather conditions and the need for repairs to the ships during their port calls often delayed their departures. Since the vessels were exposed to the furies of the hurricanes during the fall season they often had to drop anchor in the lee of some Carrabean island. The average stay in the port of Charlestown was almost one full month. In many cases the post office there closed a mail several days prior to a ship's actual departure due to unfavorable winds or low tides.

This kind of mail service via the West Indies and Pensacola appeared to be too slow to meet the growing demands of the letter writing community on both sides of the Atlantic. Consequently there was good cheer in Charlestown's business quarters when they read Timothy's announcement of December 31, 1768. From January on the packet boats sailed directly from and to Falmouth on a monthly basis with a short stop in Bermuda (See the map of figure F-31).

When reading the existing litersture on the subject (f-28) one becomes confused about the exact time this change came about. It may be that researchers who scanned the British records made reference to expressed desires or to plans which were considered at the time. It is for that reason that the Charlestown Gazette's weekly reports of port movements are very valuable, because they prove without any doubt that the circumstantial voyages via the West Indies and Pensacola were discontinued in December, 1768.

The first ship under the new schedule, LE DISPENSER, sailed from Charlestown on the 23rd of January, 1769, and returned on May 23rd, to sail homeward only four days later. Obviously the change meant a great improvement in the movement of the overseas mail. Roundtrips were reduced from an average of 7 months to one of $3\frac{1}{2}$ months.

One other measure proved to shorten the transatlantic crossings considerably when the ships' bottoms were provided with a copper sheathing.

The Maritime News column in Peter Timothy's South Carolina Gazette has made it possible to reconstruct almost the entire operational schedule. Practically all Charlestown arrivals and sailings of the packet boats of the years 1765 through 1768 could be recorded (figure F-32). It made it possible to learn many details of their movements.

(f-28) Howard Robinson: Carrying British Mails Overseas. (1964), p. 48.
Clinton N. Howard: The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769 (1947). p. 18.

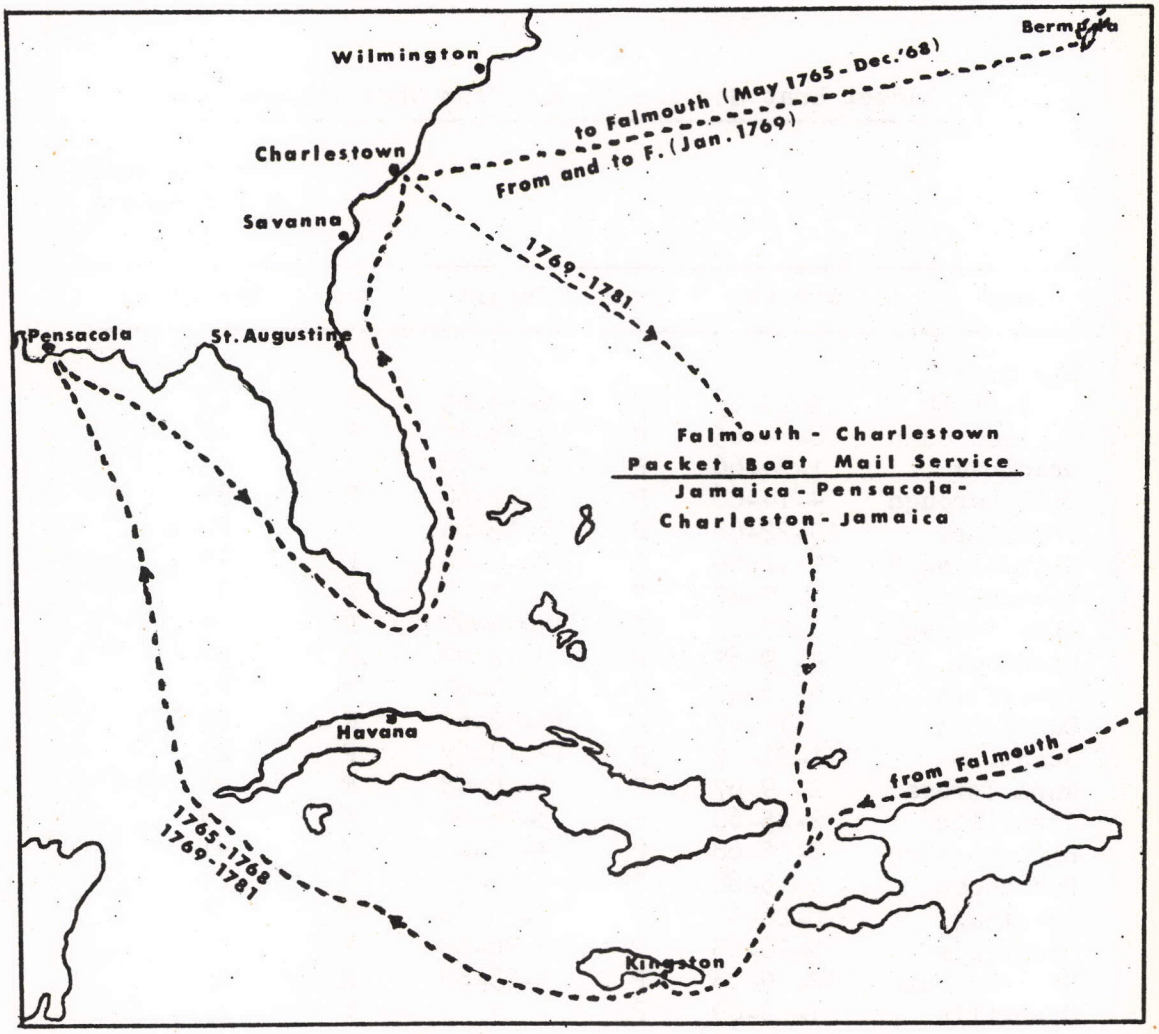

Wilmington
Bermuda
to Falmouth (May 1765 - Dec.'68)
From and to F. (Jan. 1769)
Charlestown
Savanna
1769-1781
Pensacola
St. Augustine
Falmouth - Charlestown
Packet Boat Mail Service
Jamaica - Pensacola -
Charleston - Jamaica
Havana
from Falmouth
1765-1768
1769-1781
Kingston

Figure F-31

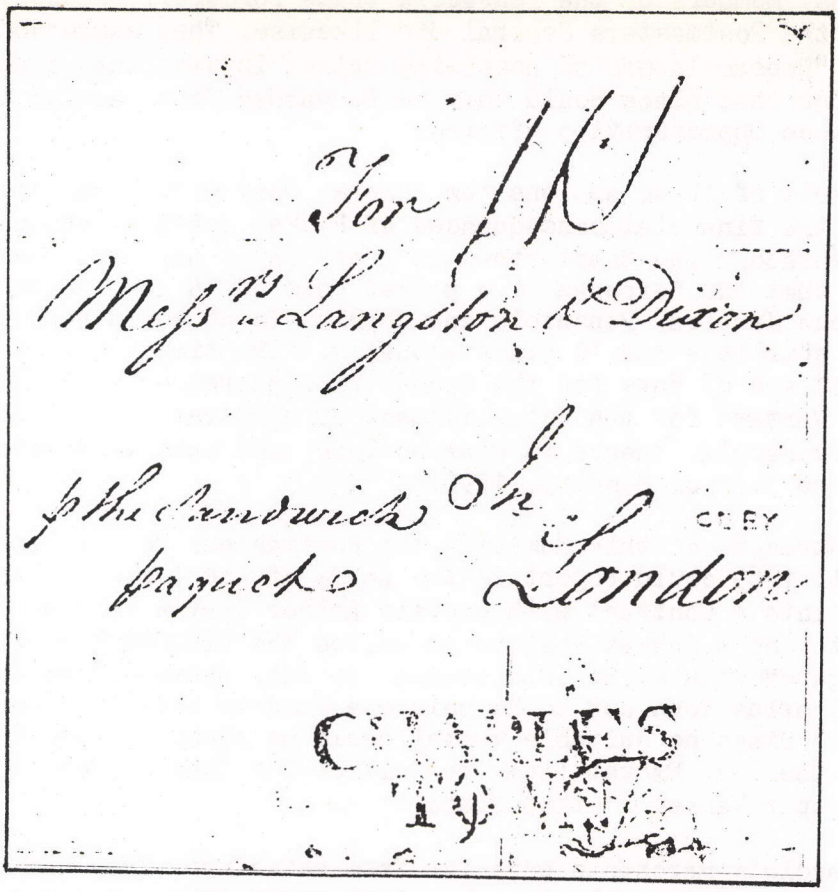
Packet Boat Service to and from Charlestown, S.C.

P = Pensacola
F = Falmouth

Ship	Arrival	From	Depart	For	Days stay	
The Snow Suffolk	5-22-65	P	6-14-65	F	23	
Hillsborough	8-14-65	P	9-23-65	F	40	
Grantham	1-24-66	P	2-22-66	F	29	
Hillsborough	4-14-66	P	5-19-66	F	35	
Grenville	10-22-66	P	11-19-66	F	28	(1)
Hillsborough	11-12-66	P	12- 7-66	F	25	
Duncannon	3- 7-67	F	?	?	?	
Anna Teresa	3-23-67	P	4-22-67	F	30	(2)
Grantham	4- 9-67	P	5-12-67	F	33	
Grenville	6- 6-67	P	8- 4-67	F	29	
Duncannon	9-11-67	P	10-10-67	F	29	(3)
Grantham	11-21-67	P	12-13-67	F	22	
Anna Teresa	12- 9-67	P	1- 6-68	F	28	(4)
Grenville	2-25-68	P	3-25-68	F	29	
Hillsborough	3-15-68	P	4-25-68	F	41	
Duncannon	4-13-68	P	5-14-68	F	21	
Grantham	6-26-68	P	8- 3-68	F	38	
Grenville	9-16-68	P	10-26-68	F	41	
Hillsborough	12- 9-68	P	1-23-69	F	45	
Grenville	1-13-69	P	?	?	?	

Soon afterwards the Maritime News in the South Carolina Gazette was discontinued.

(1) Mail closed 11-14.
(2) Mail closed 3-30.
(3) Cleared 10-1.
(4) Cleared 12-30.



F-33. CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, March 8, 1770, to London, By the SANDWICH packet, Capt. Ayres. She had arrived March 1, and sailed March 25. (J.H.Smith).

Figure F-33 displays a letter from Charlestown to London which was carried by one of the packet boats in the faster mail service. For many years the direct line between Falmouth and Charlestown was continued, though with interruptions during the revolutionay war.

However, the change did not result in a broken postal contact with the West Indies. That would have been a serious blow to the flourishing trade between the two areas. The same was true for the rapidly developing commercial activities in West Florida, where merchants in Pensacola were greatly interested in regular packet boat services with the outside world (See Chapter on Florida Colonial Mail). Naturally there were numerous private vessels sailing between the Caribbean Islands and mainland ports. They used to carry a substantial part of the correspondence back and forth. But it remained the obligation of the British Post Office to maintain the packet service.

Merchants on both sides of the ocean petitioned to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury for a reopening of the Packet boat service bdtween southern ports of the American mainland and the West

Indies islands. Members of the Pensacola trade forcefully supported the request, and the Postmasters General did likewise. They expressed as their opinion that "Pensacola was of necessity rather injured than benefited, as the letters for that place could only be forwarded from Jamaica by Merchant Ships when Opportunities offered."

As a result of these actions the General Post Office was instructed to advise on the financial consequences of Packet service connecting Jamaica with Pensacola and Charlestown in South Carolina. Their calculations showed that the "expense of a packet boat of 45 tons to be established between Jamaica, Pensacola and Charles Town" would be 608 pounds sterling, 10 shillings and 10 pence annually. "The time requisit to perform a voyage" was 83 days for the round trip. Whereupon their Lordships had issued a Warrant for the establishment of a Packet Boat service from "Jamaica to Pensacola, thence to Charles Town, and back to Jamaica." That was on the 31st of January, 1796.

On the strength of this decision the Postmasters General in London on April 21st, 1769 could report to the Lords of the Treasury that they had "entered into a Contract with Captain Arthur Clarke for the Hire, Wear, Tear etc. of a Packet Boat to be called the DILIGENCE of forty five Tons navigated with eight able seamen, to sail between Jamaica, Pensacola, and Charles Town and to be paid one Hundred & Fifty Pounds for every voyage." Since no suitable vessel could be found Captain Clarke "went out on the last Packet (the Greenville) for Charles Town in order to build a proper Vessel at that place."

But Pensacola's merchants were far from satisfied. They had petitioned for rwo packet boats, able to make eight round trips annually in stead of only four. They decided to call again on the officials in London after having obtained strong support from His Majesty's Agent for the Province of West Florida, John Ellis, who transmitted the merchants' second Memorial with his letter of April 10th, 1770, addressed to the Earl of Sandwich and Lord Le Dispenser, the Postmasters General.

On July 5th, 1770 the Prime Minister, Lord North, put his signature on a final decision which allowed the Floridians, and the South Carolinians as well, to have their second packet boat and eight triangle services annually (f-29). On June 30, 1770 the Brigt. DILIGENCE, with Captain Arthur Clarke in command had arrived in Charlestown from Pensacola, now followed by the Sloop COMET on April 29, 1771, under Captain Thomas McDonough.

From then on their sailings and arrivals were regularly reported in the maritime column of the loacl newspaper. A normal run of the DILIGENCE looks as follows:

Nov. 9, 1774	Arrival in Charlestown from Pensacola;
Nov. 19	Departure from Charlestown to Jamaica;
Dec. 10	Arrival in Pensacola from Jamaica;
Dec. 22	Departure from Pensacola to Charlestown;
Jan. 9, 1775	Arrival in Charlestown from Pensacola.

(f-29) Details abstracted from the British Transcripts and the General Post Office Letter Book: 1760-1771. (Library of Congress).

These particular sailings have been chosen from the available data because a letter has been found which was carried by the DILIGENCE from Pensacola to Charlestown late December 1774. The cover of this letter is shown as figure V-7 in the Chapter on The American Bottom. The endorsement on its back indicates that the letter entered the British Parliamentary postal system in Pensacola.

In view of the political developments in New England the publisher of the South Carolina Gazette decided to discontinue the Maritime News Column in February, 1775, probably ordered to so by the Governor.

When peace between Great Britain and the United States had been established in 1783 the British were anxious to resume regular commercial and postal relations with America, for they considered the young republic to have the potential for a bright future. It was Benjamin Frenklin who opened the door for diplomatic contacts on the subject and found his old friend Anthony Todd, the secretary to the Postmasters General, concerned about the progress the French had made in establishing a monthly packet service between L'Orient and New York (f-30). Within a few months he succeeded in making arrangements with the two European competitors over the objections of Ebenezer Hazard, the American postmaster general at the time, who considered Franklin's activities an infringement upon his prerogatives and those of the Congress (f-31). The result was a monthly packet service to and from the United States, alternating between the British and the French.

The first post-war packet boat sailed from Falmouth to New York on the first Wednesday of December 1783. But the resumption of the mail service had a very rough start. The New York papers of February the 26th, 1784 carried the following news item:

> "An account was brought to town a few days ago, that the SHELBURNE packet, with the British November mail from Falmouth, having been prevented by extreme violent weather from an arrival at this port, had taken shelter at Charleston, South Carolina, from whence she may be daily expected."

As an interesting counterpart to the last packet letter from New York (F-25) to England in 1776 the first one shipped from London after the war, on December 3, 1783, via the liberated city on the Hudson to Hartford, Connecticut, is shown in figure F-34. It crossed the Atlantic on the hapless SHELBURNE and was forwarded from Charlestown to its Connecticut destination.

Soon a dispute developed between the General Post Offices on both sides of the ocean on the subject of prepayment or nonprepayment of the packet postage by the senders. The fact that the French government decided to open a transatlantic postal service of its own (see the next Chapter) complicated the matter. The original settlement between the

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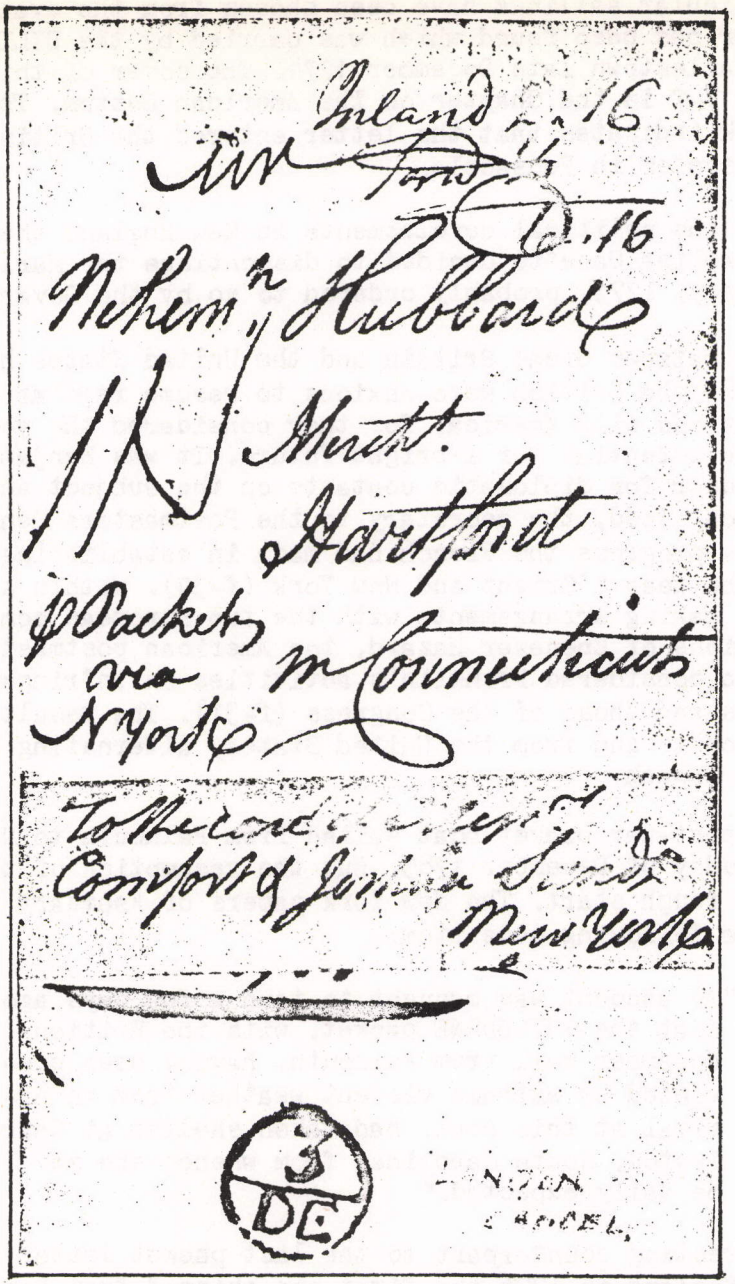
(f-30) See the Chapter on the French Packet Service.
(f-31) Ruth Lapham Butler: Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General (1928). pp. 170-71.



F-34. London, Bishop mark 3/DE(CEMBER). 1783, first packet mail after war of independence, to Hartford, via Charlestown, S.C. forwarded from New York. Packet rate 4 dwts, inland rate 2 dwts, 16 gr., total 6 dwts, 16 gr. (C.D.McFadden).

two parties as announced to the public in the broadside by the General Post-Office on November 18th, 1783 stated "the Packet Postage of one Shilling for a single Letter and so in Proportion between London and New York, may or may not be paid at each Place before-hand."(figure F-35) However, this arrangement led to confusion and Ebenezer Hazard argued against it. According to him his department would suffer a loss if a

General Poſt-Office,

November 18th, 1783.

A Sufficient Number of Packet Boats of about 200 Tons and 30 Hands, are eſtabliſhed between Falmouth and New-York to ſupport a monthly Correſpondence, and the Mails will continue to be diſpatched as at preſent from London and from New-York upon the firſt Wedneſday in every Month.

All Perſons are however to take Notice, that inſtead of it's being any longer left to the Option of the Writer to pay or not the Poſtage before-hand, there is now a neceſſity for the Poſtage on all Letters from any Part of Great-Britain or Ireland for North America to be paid up to London, without which they muſt be opened and returned to the Writers, but the Packet Poſtage of one Shilling for a ſingle Letter and ſo in Proportion between London and New-York, may or not be paid at each Place before-hand.

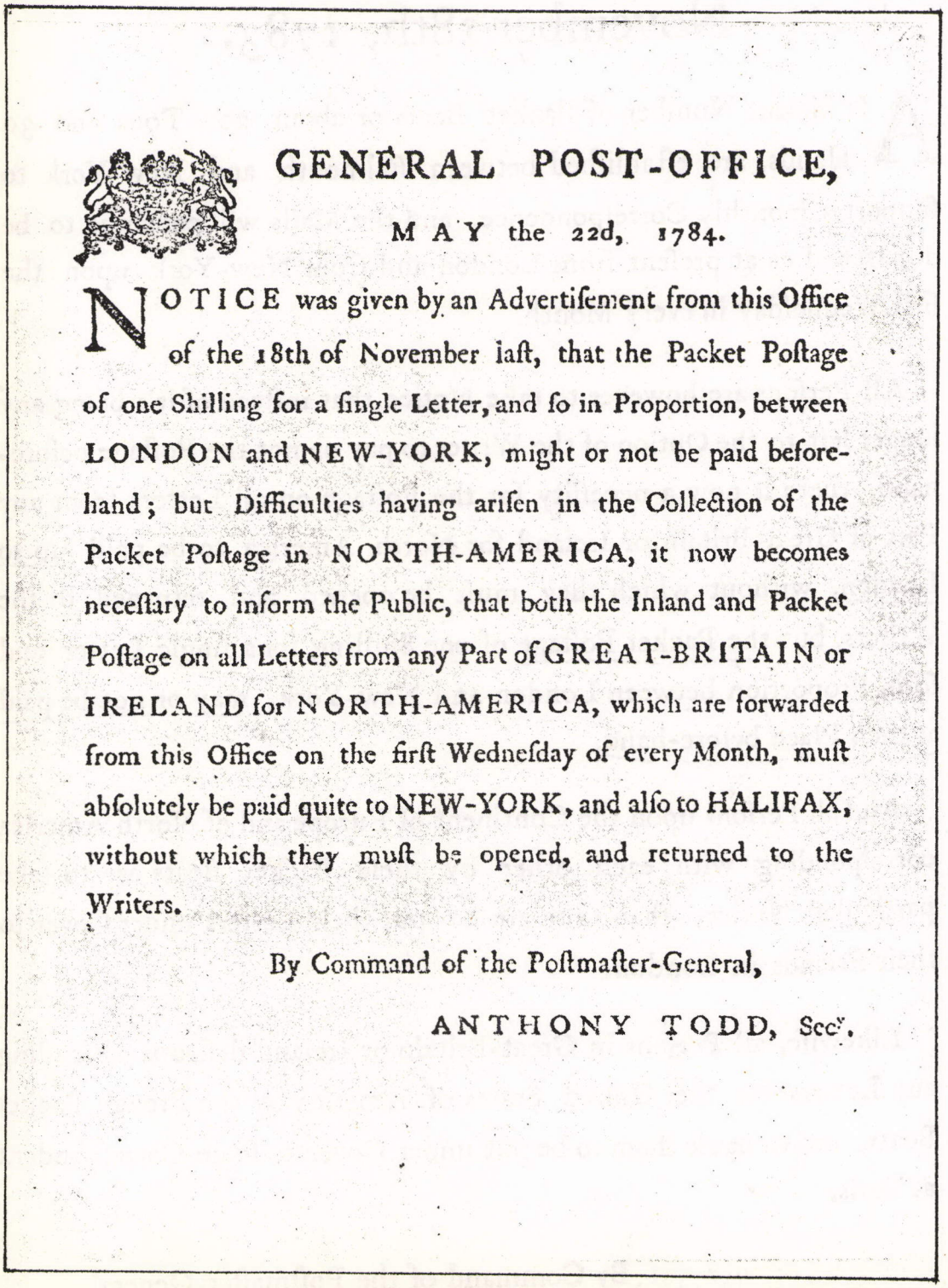
And all Perſons upon the Continent of Europe and of North America correſponding with each other by theſe Packet Boats are to take particular Notice, that they are to put their Letters under Cover to their Friends in London.

Likewiſe, all Perſons in Great-Britain or Ireland deſirous of ſending any Letters for the United States of America by the French Packet Boats, are to cauſe them to be put under Cover to ſome Correſpondent at Paris.

By Command of the Poſtmaſter-General,

ANTHONY TODD, Sec.

packet letter appeared to be undeliverable, as some often were, if such letter's transatlantic postage had not been prepaid by its sender. The first agreement had to be amended in May, 1784, as shown by the notice which is exhibited in figure F-36. From then on the principle of prepaid packet postage was generally accepted.



GENERAL POST-OFFICE,

MAY the 22d, 1784.

NOTICE was given by an Advertiſement from this Office of the 18th of November laſt, that the Packet Poſtage of one Shilling for a ſingle Letter, and ſo in Proportion, between LONDON and NEW-YORK, might or not be paid beforehand; but Difficulties having ariſen in the Collection of the Packet Poſtage in NORTH-AMERICA, it now becomes neceſſary to inform the Public, that both the Inland and Packet Poſtage on all Letters from any Part of GREAT-BRITAIN or IRELAND for NORTH-AMERICA, which are forwarded from this Office on the firſt Wedneſday of every Month, muſt abſolutely be paid quite to NEW-YORK, and alſo to HALIFAX, without which they muſt be opened, and returned to the Writers.

By Command of the Poſtmaſter-General,

ANTHONY TODD, Secr.

F-36. General Post Office Notice, 1784. (From Frank Staff: The Transatlantic Mail, p.42. By permission.)

G. The French Transatlantic Packet Service

1783 - 1788

Marc W. Martin

In the second issue of the newly published four-page biweekly New York Independent Journal and Advertiser of November 22, 1783 a short paragraph reaads as follows:

> "Last Wednesday evening arrived here the packet LE COURIER DE L'EUROPE commanded by Capt. Cornick, with the mail from Port L'Orient. In the ship came passenger, - Thatcher, Esq.; secretary to the Hon. John Adams, Ambassador from the United States to the States General of Holland, charged by the American Commissioners with the DEFINITIVE TREATY signed by them on the 3rd of September, and on the part of Great Britain by Mr. Hartley; with which he, on Thursday morning, sat off to deliver to the Hon. General Mifflin, President of the Congress. - Hector St. John.; appointed by the Court of France to be Consul and superintendant of the packets, now established between this city and Port L'Orient, with several French gentlemen, were also passengers."

Down the column of news, in italized print, one could read among ship arrival announcements:

> "Courier de l'Europe, Capt Cornick arrived November 19 from L'Orient in 54 days."

Thus the first regular transatlantic packet service between France and the United States was ushered in without a flourish, without a prior public announcement, or without what would be called to-day: a Press Release.

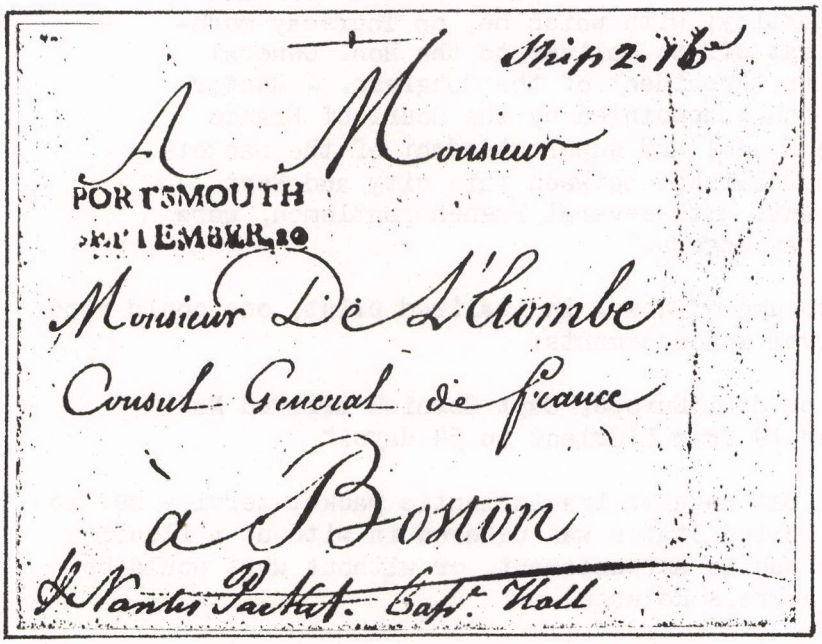
The question may be asked: What prompted the organization of this French service while Great Britain at the same time tried to resume its regular transatlantic communications with North America by their old packet service, which had been interrupted during the war years ?

Now that American ports were open to the international trade

France was determined to establish commercial and postal relations with the young republic as soon as possible. During more than one century the British Navigation Laws had prevented any country but their own from trading with the American colonies. Since Oliver Cromwell, the Protector, in 1666 had issued his ultra-protective decrees only ships flying the Union Jack and manned by British crews had been allowed to enter American ports. Though the revo-tionary government in Philadelphia at the time of their declaring America's independence had invalidated the Navigation Laws as far as their territory was concerned, wartime hazards had prevented the French and other nationalities from establishing direct trade relations with American markets and from opening their own postal contacts.

The radical change in the political situation, confirmed by the Treaty of Versailles justified France's decision to send the COURIER DE L'EUROPE to New York as a first partial fulfillment of a desire which had laid dormant for so long. After all France's interest in America;s development dated back from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, decades before the British established their first foothold on American soil. Moreover French soldiers, French arms and French ships had contributed substantially to the defeat of the British regime on the North-American continent.

Even before a peace treaty was signed between the warring countries enterprising private French shippers had grasped the



G-1. Nantes, July 8, 1783, to Boston by private ship (Nantes Packet), via PORTSMOUTH/ SEPTEMBER 20. On reverse forwarder's endorsement (WATSON & COPORAL). Ship letter, 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Siegal Auction).

opportunity of sending mail across, supported as they were in this exploit by the moral and financial backing of the Chambers of Commerce in several French port cities.

An early letter from France to Boston via Nantes and Portsmouth, New Hampshire, is depicted in figure G-1. The manuscript marking "Ship 2.16" covered the ship letter rate, including the captain's gratuity (See Chapter on American Ship Letters) of 16 grains of silver (two-pence) and the prevailing New Hampshire rate of 2 pennyweights of silver (six pence). Prior to the event of the Royal French Packet Line, established in 1783, all overseas correspondence was left to the care and good services of miscellenous seafarers, of ship owners and Chambers of Commerce in the French port cities. This was the traditional way of dispatching letters and there was no charge for it.

Before 1759, the French Post Office did not accept letters addressed to overseas destinations. When a vessel was about to sail from a French port the ship's owner used to keep a box or a bag in readiness open to the public for depositing their letters. A sender living in the interior had to address his message to someone (generally a forwarding agent) for transfer to the mail bag of a departing ship. In contrast to the British usage of charging 1 penny for carrying a letter overseas and paying the captain a fee of 1 penny for delivering it to the post office, the French practice prohibited captains from receiving ant compensation (g-1). As it could be surmised, in the absence of any monetary incentive some skippers did not consider it a crime to open the mail bags entrusted to them and take out letters addressed to such people they knew would accept them for a price. Pilferage was prevalent and the safest way to forward a letter overseas was to entrust it to a seafarer and to pay him his price for the service. From 1728 on a succession of Royal ordinances kept ordering all sea captains sailing with mail to transfer all letters, without delay, to the postal authorities of the first port of call. However, even under threat of heavy penalties for skippers who ignored these ordinances, smuggling of letters continued to flourish.

In 1759 new French postal regulations (g-2) allowed maritime mail to be carried overland and to be taken aboard a departing ship. In such cases, the sender had to indicate the port of departure and to prepay a charge of 10 sous, in addition to the regular postage to Paris, where all letters were collected before being forwarded to the several sea ports. In the same fashion all incoming overseas letters were sent to Paris before being routed to their final destination. The service of a forwarder establish-

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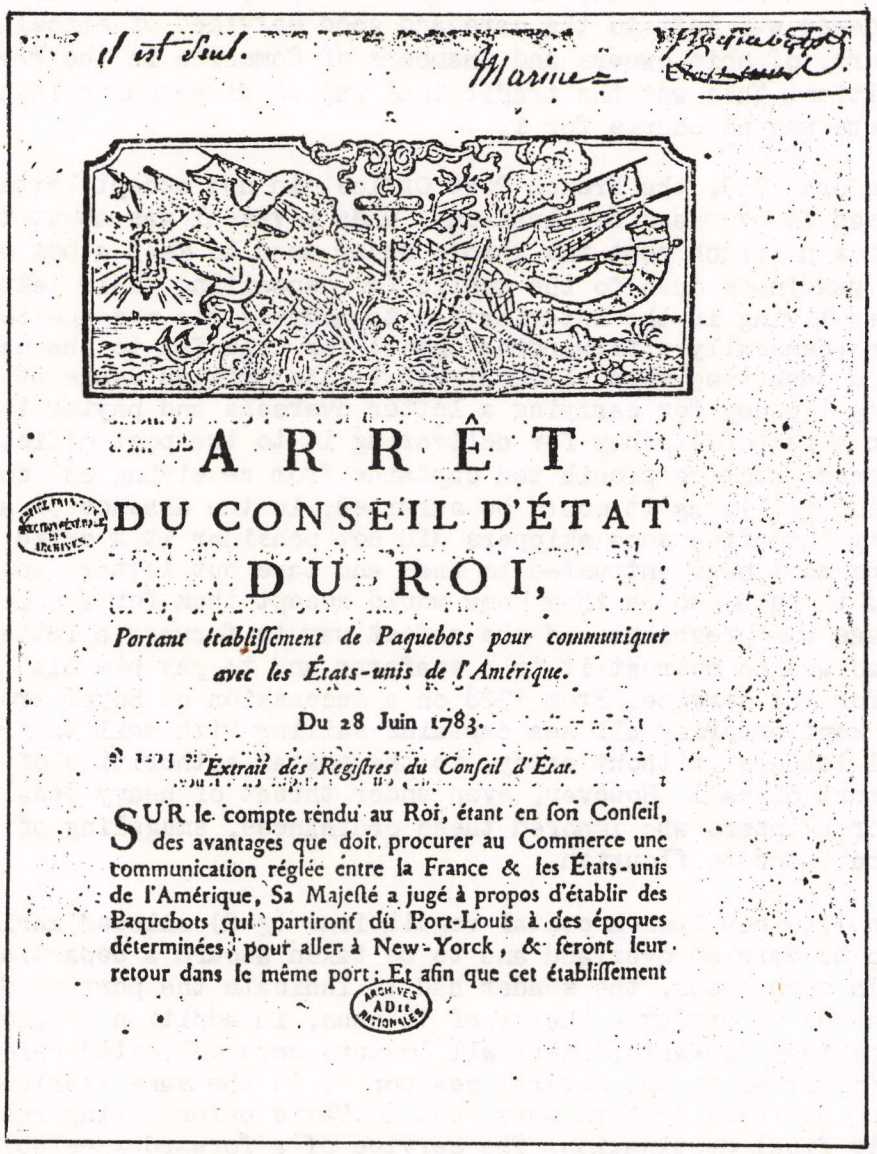
(g-1) It was only on June 28, 1783 that new regulations authorized captains of merchant vessels to be paid 2 sous for each letterbrought from overseas. Later on this compensation was extended to all maritime mail and was called "decime de mer".

(g-2) Operations of the French Post Office were farmed out to private enterprise, called "La Ferme des Postes", under a periodical contract with the government. The contractor carried mail, operated coaches between several cities and collected postage, paying the Royal Administration a fixed annual lump sum.

ed in a port city were essential to avoid delays and losses.

Several projects planned by private individuals to establish regular ship and mail services to America were initiated between 1773 and 1777. They all received the approval of the French government, but none of these attempts succeded. Finally King Louis XVI himself decided to create a Packet Line between France and the United States. On June 28, 1783 a Royal decree established the principle of a State-run and State-financed Transatlantic Packet Line (figure G-2).



Il est Seul.

Marine

ARRÊT

DU CONSEIL D'ÉTAT

DU ROI,

Portant établiſſement de Paquebots pour communiquer avec les États-unis de l'Amérique.

Du 28 Juin 1783.

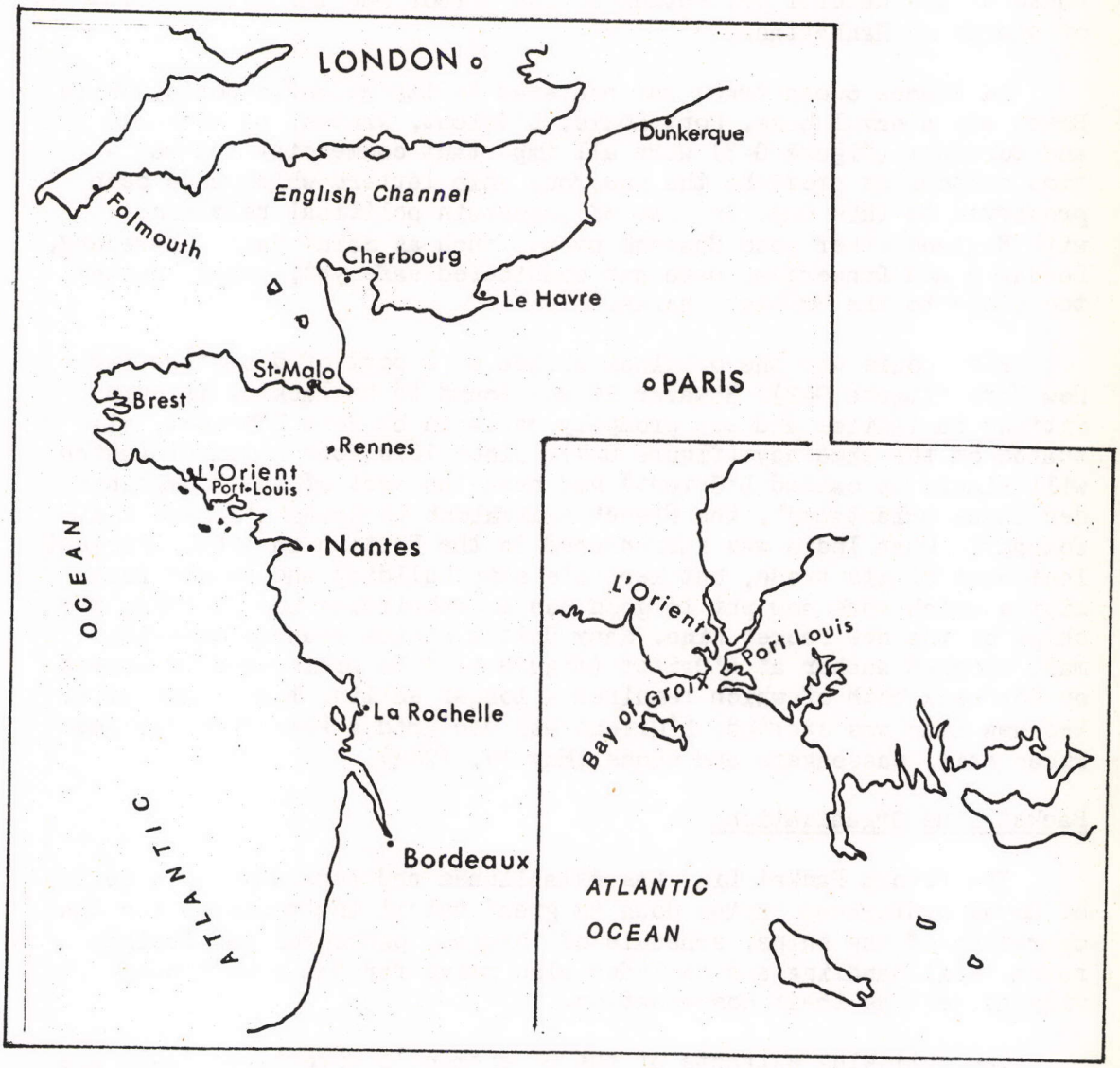
Extrait des Regiſtres du Conſeil d'État.

SUR le compte rendu au Roi, étant en ſon Conſeil, des avantages que doit procurer au Commerce une communication réglée entre la France & les États-unis de l'Amérique, Sa Majeſté a jugé à propos d'établir des Paquebots qui partiront du Port-Louis à des époques déterminées, pour aller à New-Yorck, & feront leur retour dans le même port. Et afin que cet établiſſement

ARCHIVES ADIE NATIONALES

G-2. Title page of the Royal decree of June 28, 1783 creating the State-run Transatlantic Packet Line between Port-Louis and New York. (Leon Dubus).

Regulations issued on July 5, 1783 allowed the ships, which were the King's property and serviced the new Packet Line, exclusively to carry "Mail, passengers and their luggage, fashionable goods, ready-made garments for men and women, wine or liquor (only in bottles) and other expensive merchandise". Shipment of bales or barrels was expressely prohibited since their transportation by the packets could result in protests of unfair competition from private shipowners and skippers. French regulations differed sharp-



G-3. The main port of the French Transatlantic Packet Line was established in L'Orient (Port Louis) in 1783 and was moved to Le Havre in 1787. British packets were sailing from Falmouth.

G-4. Originally designated as the port of departure for the French trasnatlantic packets, Port Louis gave way to L'Orient, a port better equipped to handle ship repairs and refittings. Both ports are situated on the Bay of Groix.

ly from those pertaining to the British packet service. Their ships were not allowed to carry merchandise nor private passengers.

On both sides of the Atlantic terminal ports of the new line were selected carefully with regard to harbor safety, repair facilities and the possibility of armed conflicts.

On the American side New York was chosen in preference to Philadelphia (though at that time three times as important a city) because of its natural protection of its harbor and the availability of wharfs on Manhattan.

In France ocean trade was centered in its Atlantic ports. While Brest was a naval base, Port Louis, L'Orient, Nantes, La Rochelle and Bordeaux (figure G-3) were all important commercial and maritime centers as provenby the numerous ship letters which have been preserved to this day. In view of uncertain political relations with England other good Channel ports, such as Saint Malo, Cherbourg, Le Havre and Dunkerque, were not considered safe yet, being located too close to the British shores.

Port Louis was the original choice as a port of departure for New York (figure G-2). However it was found to be lacking in ship fitting facilities and was promptly replaced by Port L'Orient, situated on the same bay (figure G-4). Since 1670 Port L'Orient (which will simply be called L'Orient) had been the seat of the "Compagnie des Indes Orientales", the French equivalent to Britain's East India Company". When India was surrendered to the British in 1763, L'Orient lost much of its trade, but kept its ship building and repair facilities which were now put to good use in rebuilding and fitting the ships of the new Packet Line. Many United States traders carrying mail dropped anchor at L'Orient (figure G-3) in preference to Nantes or Bordeaux both of which required a longer sailing time. Soon after the new line was started, L'Orient was declared a Free Port for American mail, passengers and goods (May 14, 1784).

Packet Line Organization.

The French Packet Line was established and regulated by a series of Royal ordinances laying down in great detail instructions for the operation of the ships, schedule of voyages, passenger and freight rates, mail handling and included also rules for the crew's behavior as well as their compensation.

The following extracts of the Government's directives (g-3) are relevant to the conveyance of the mail.

From the Decree of June 27, 1783 (figure G-2) establishing the principle of a packet line for communications with the United States of America:

(g-3) Leon Dubus: Les trois premieres Regies de Paquebot-Poste pour New York sous Louis XVI. Revue de l'Academie de Philatelie, Documents Philateliques, July-October, 1967. Complete text of decrees and regulations.

Art.1- Royal ships to be available in sufficient numbers in Port Louis to assure a regular departure on the 3rd Tuesday of each month starting next September.
Art.2- Ships restricted to carry mail, passengers and some specially designated merchandise.
Art.3- Royal Navy officers to be in charge of the packets; officers and crews to be paid by the King and to observe Royal Navy discipline.

From the Regulations of June 28, 1783 supplementing the Decree of the same date:

Art.4- All mail to the United States to be postpaid by the sender.
Art.5- Postpaid postage to include both French inland and transatlantic packet charges.
Art.6- Captains of merchant vessels arriving from the United States ordered to hand over any mail they may have carried to the Post Office for rating transatlantic and French inland postage (to be paid by the addressee).
Art.7- Captains of merchant vessels are prohibited to carry any mail to the United States, however are authorized to do so on their return to France and will be compensated by a fee of 2 sous per letter delivered to the French post office.

Rates for transatlantic carrying of the mail to be paid (by the French Post Office) to the King's Packet Line manager:

For each letter or parcel of one ounce or less: 1 L. (L = livre = 20 sous)
For each letter with envelope: 1 L. 1 sou (= 21 sous)
For each double letter: 1 L. 18 sous (= 38 sous)
Over one ounce: 2 L. for each additional ounce.

From the Decree of December 14, 1786 creating an extension of the transatlantic packet service to the French colonies and to the United States of America (scheduled 24 ships):

Art.1- Yearly voyages to New York to be reduced from 12 to 8; establishment of 12 yearly packet trips to the French colonies; departures from Le Havre (to the U.S. and the colonies) and from Bordeaux (colonies only).

From the Regulations of December 14, 1786 supplementing the decree of the same date (figure G-5):

Art.5- Departures for the U.S. to take place on February 10, March 25, May 10, June 25, August 10, September 25, November 10 and December 25. Return voyages from New York on the 75th day following their sailing from Le Havre.

RÈGLEMENT

POUR LES PAQUEBOTS

Établis par arrêt du Conſeil du 14 décembre 1786, pour communiquer avec les Colonies Françoiſes, aux Iſles du Vent & ſous le Vent, les Iſles de France & de Bourbon, & les États-Unis de l'Amérique.

Du 14 Décembre 1786.

DE PAR LE ROI.

SA MAJESTÉ s'étant réſervé de faire connoître ſes intentions, relativement à la police intérieure des Paquebots établis par arrêt de ſon Conſeil du 14 décembre 1786, & de fixer le tarif des Droits qui devront être perçus, tant ſur les paſſagers que ſur les marchandiſes qui pourroient être chargées ſur leſdits Paquebots, Elle a ordonné & ordonne ce qui ſuit :

A

G-5. Title page of Regulations issued in December 1786 reorganizing the French Packet Line to the United States. (Leon Dubus).

Art.6- Packets delayed at destination should return 3 days after arrival.

Art.14- Management of the packets abroad to be under the direction of the French Consul in the United States.

Art.15- Prohibited to officers and crews to carry any letters other than the Post Office mail and to engage in any commercial activities.

From the Decree of December 20, 1786 establishing new postage

rates between France and the United States:

Art.2- Overseas mail via Le Havre or Bordeaux to be subject to inland postage and to packet rates; all mail between France and the United States to be prepaid by the sender as before.

Art.3- All letters addressed to the United States, originating in France or in transit from foreign countries to be forwarded to and collected at Le Havre and Bordeaux before being taken aboard packets.

Art.4- Any private person is permitted to mail letters and parcels by merchant vessels from any part of the Kingdom or French colonies provided he deposits these letters or parcels into a regular Post Office mail box marking them with the name of the ship and port of loading. Postmasters to direct such mail to the vessel's point of departure where the port Director is to collect all letters in a sealed mail chest and entrust it, against receipt, to the captain of the chosen vessel to carry it to its destination, where a French postal agent will give the captain a release which has to be handed back to the Director of the port of departure after the return of the ship. (g-4)

Art.5- Captains of merchant vessels to be allowed to carry letters without charge which pertain to their own service and which weigh less than 20 ounces, provided these letters are handed over to the Postmaster (at port of departure) who will keep them separate and mark them "Captain's Service". The captain of a merchant vessel is entitled to receive 15 sous per pound of letters from the Postal Administration to be paid to him upon arrival.

Art.6- Captains of merchant vessels who carry mail or make others to carry mail in disregard of these regulations will be punished with a two years suspension for a first offense and for life in case of a second offence.

Art.7- Newspapers and printed matter to be mailed in the same fashion as letters and to be charged twice the rate of inland postage provided they are sent under wrapper.

Transatlantic rates for letters or bundles of papers by packet from Le Havre or Bordeaux, or by merchant vessel sailing from and to the United States of America:

Letters of one ounce or less	20 sous
For each additional ounce	10 sous.

(g-4) Art.4 does not mention mail to and from the U.S. as Art. 2 and 3 do. Nothing in these Regulations seems to prohibit specifically the carrying of mail to America by merchant ships. In the absence of a postal treaty between France and the U.S. only French ships were allowed officially to transport a Post Office mail chest across the Atlantic.

From Instructions published in 1787 (probably in January) with reference to the Decree of December 14, 1786 and pertaining to the 2nd Regie:

> Art.27- The captain or his mate, accompanied by a postal employee will receive from the Post Office the mail pouch and take it aboard on the scheduled day of departure. An affidavit will be prepared and signed by the postal employee and one of the packet's officers. In case of a delayed sailing the captain shall immediately inform the Postmaster who is qualified to decide whether additional mail pouches may be required.

The Packets and their Voyages.

The French Packet Line, established by Royal decree dated June and July 1783 was ordered to start monthly sailings to New York the following September. Since there was insufficient time to build new ships five corvettes (sloops of war) and other sailing ships with French Royal Navy officers and crews were assigned to the project. They were:

> The COURIER DE L'EUROPE, formerly the "Serin";
> The COURIER DE L'AMERIQUE, formerly the "Ecureuil";
> The COURIER DE PORT-LOUIS, formerly the "Hariot";
> The COURIER DE NEW YORK, formerly the "Alligator", and
> The COURIER DE L'ORIENT, formerly the "Fortune I".

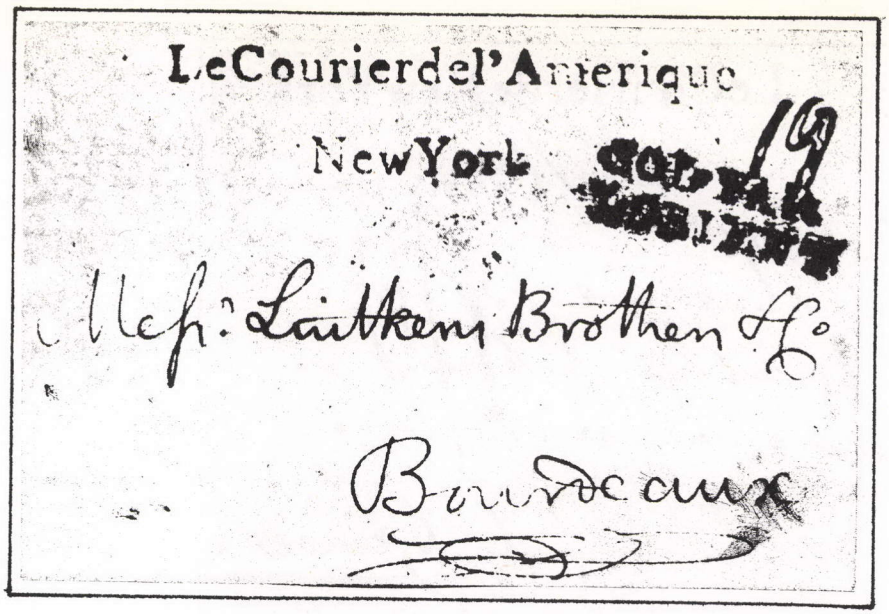
The last three of these were French war prizes taken from the British during recent hostilities. All ships were hastily rebuilt into packets with fore and aft decks combined into one and with comfortable cabins for 20 to 25 passengers. The crews consisted of 48 to 52 officers and men, including a cook and a steward. Departures originally were scheduled for the 15th of each month, but they were changed after the third sailing as reported in the "Independant Journal or General Advertiser" of December 1st, 1783:

> "We are informed that the British Mail, established between Falmouth and New York, are directed to sail on the first Wednesday - and those designated by this city's Court to leave Port L'Orient on the third Wednesday every month." (g-5)

This schedule of alternating departures was mainly due to Benjamin Franklin's suggestions who, as former Postmaster General and, at that time Ambassador to France, took great interest in the esblishment of the new French Packet Line. He even submitted a practical plan of forwarding American Mail with French destinations via British packets or to England via French ships. However, Ebenezer Hazard, the American Postmaster General, turned it down. (g-6)

(g-5) This was an erroneous information: departures were set for each 3rd Tuesday.

(g-6) Ruth Lapham Butler: Doctor Franklin, Postmaster General. (New York, 1923), pp. 167-172.



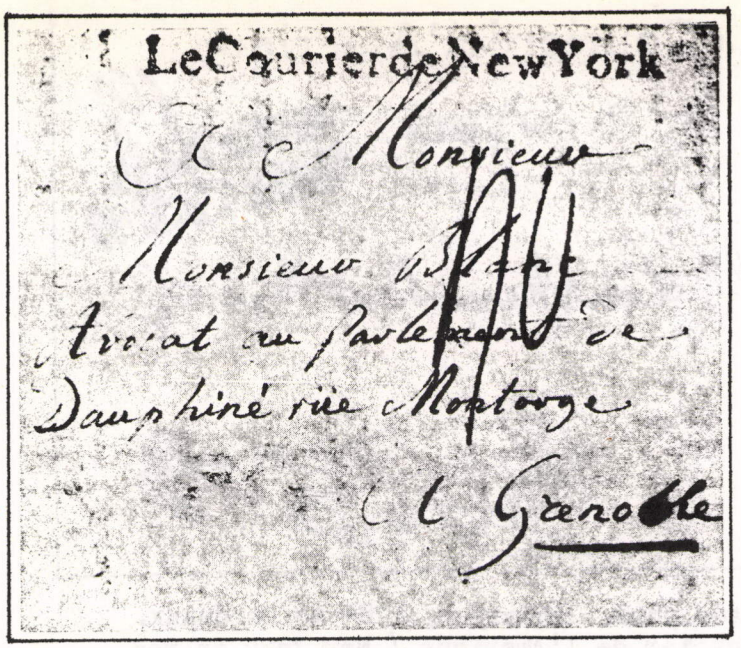
G-6. Philadelphia, January 6, 1784 to Bordeaux. Le Courier de l'Amerique / New York in red (1st return voyage). Partly conform French regulations requiring ship's name, port of departure, but omitting date. In black, as used on all incoming overseas mail from 1760 to 1794 COL.PAR/L'ORIENT (Colonies via L'Orient). French inland rate of 19 sous in manuscript. (Leon Dubus).

Packet sailings from New York were made on the 15th of each month for the French (figures G-6 and G-7), and on the first for the British. Naturally departure schedules were subject to sea and weather conditions. (g-7)

Of the 5 original packets the COURIER DE PORT-LOUIS was lost on her first crossing and was replaced by the WARWICK. Additional ships were added to the packet fleet when delays occured due to repairs and refittings. In the course of the following five years they were the SYLPHE, the MARTINIQUE, the MARECHAL DE CASTRIES (built in America) and later the DEUX FRERES and an unnamed new vessel designated only as PACKET NUMBER ONE.

The administration of the French Packet Line was entrusted to a "Regie", a government organization which functioned as a private enterprise under a management designated by the King. At the end of 1784 the project ran out of money, which was funded to it by the government. Because of the importance the King attached to maintaining regular communications with the United States, he covered the anticipated deficit during the following two years from his own purse. By the end of 1786 and in spite of monetary losses, a second

(g-7) The Boston Gazette and Country Journal of May 31, 1784 stated in an advertisement that French packets from New York "sail as near the 20th of each month as their arrival will possibly permit." However, reported departure dates show that the sailings took place on or after the 15th of each month.



G-7. New York, March 16, 1784 to Grenoble by Le Courier de New York (1st return voyage) March 20. Marking black instead of prescribed red; neither marking of port of departure nor date. French rate 40 sous in manuscript to be paid by addressee, being transatlantic rate plus inland postage to Grenoble. (Leon Dubus).

Regie was established with an ambitious plan of building 24 packets and operating them between France, her colonies and America. From then on ships were to leave from Le Havre to the United States and from Le Havre and Bordeaux for the French colonies. The number of annual voyages to New York was reduced from 12 to 8. This new project, which started in February 1787, was in operation for 14 months. However, it failed to meet the expectations. Political events and financial difficulties, leading to the French revolution, compelled the King on July 5, 1788 to order the discontinuation of all state-run ship lines and the construction of any new packets. France reverted to the old system of carrying the mail by unscheduled private ships.

A table of sailing data covering the 79 Atlantic crossings made by the French packets was originally prepared and documented by Mr. Leon Dubus, the very eminent member of the Academie de Philatelie in his article: "Les Trois Premieres Regies de Paquebot-poste pour New York sous Louis XVI" in the July-October 1967 issues of the Documents Philateliques. It has been possible to add some missing data to the tabulation presented herewith by consulting New York newspapers of the entire period.

Voyages by the French Royal Packet Line between France and the United States, 1783 - 1788.

A. Under the 1st Regie. Departure from l'Orient.

Packet	Depart. l'Orient	Arriv. N.York	Days	Depart. N.York	Arriv. l'Orient	Capt.
1st Courier de l'Europe	9-26-83	11-19-83	54	12- ?-83	1-27-84*	Cornick
1st Cour.de l'Amerique	10-15-83	12-15-83	59	2-31-84*	3-25-86*	Chev.d' Aboville
1st Cour.de Port Louis	11-22-83	shipwrecked				Tuvacche
1st Cour.de New York	12-17-83*	2- 5-84		3-20-84*	4-16-84*	Joubert
1st Cour.de L'Orient	1-20-84	4- 3-84	75	4-26-84	5-27-84*	De Coet-nempren
1st Warwick	2-17-84*			6-17-84	7-14-84*	Siouville
1st Sylphe	3-16-84*	4-28-84		5-24-84*	6-16-84*	
2nd Cour.de l'Europe	5- 1-84	6- 5-84	35	7-17-84	8-12-84	Cornick
2nd Cour.de l'Amerique	5-18-84*	7- 6-84		8-17-84	9-19-84*	Chev.d' Aboville
2nd Cour.de New York	6-29-84*	8- 4-84		9-16-84	10-21-84*	Joubert
2nd Cour.de L'Orient	7-31-84*	9-10-84*		10-17-84*	11-14-84*	
2nd Warwick	8-17-84*	10- 4-84*		11-16-84*	1- 3-85*	
3rd Cour.de l'Europe	10 -1-84	11-14-85	44	12-31-84	1-17-85*	
1st Martinique	10-21-84	12-30-84	70	1-15-85		Tuvache
3rd Cour.de l'Amerique	12- 1-84	1-18-85	49	2-15-85	4- 8-85	Chev.d' Aboville
3rd Cour.de l'Orient	12-30-84	3- 1-85	61	3-24-85	4-22-85	De Coet-nempren
3rd Cour.de New York	1-29-85	3-31-85	62	4-29-85	6- 1-85	Devaux

* See Table B.

B. Under the 1st Regie and Subsidized from the King's Private Purse.
Departures from l'Orient.

Packet	Depart. l'Orient	Arriv. N.York	Days	Depart. N.York	Arriv. l'Orient	Capt.
3rd Warwick	2-27-85*	5- 8-85		5-18-85* 5- 5-85**	7- 2-85*	Siouville
4th Cour.de l'Europe	3-23-85	4-29-85	37	6-16-85		Cornick
2nd Martinique	5- 1-85	5-28-85	27	7-16-85		Tuvache
4th Cour.de l'Amerique	5-22-85	7-17-85	56	8-14-85	9-11-85*	Fournier
4th Cour.de l'Orient	6- 4-85	8-25-85	52	9-18-85	10- 9-85*	De Coet-nemprun
4th Cour.de New York	9-30-85	11-13-85	45		1-11-86*	Joubert
5th Cour.de l'Europe	11-11-85	12-14-85	33	1-23-86*	2-19-86*	Tuvache
5th Cour.de l'Orient	2-16-86	4-16-86	60	5-14-86*	6-17-86*	De Coet-nemprun
6th Cour.de l'Europe	4-16-86*	5-19-86			7-17-86*	Siouville
5th Cour.de New York	6- 1-86*	7-18-86		8-20-86*	9-21-86*	Joubert
6th Cour.de l'Orient	7-16-86*	8-25-86			10-15-86*	De Coet-nemprun
7th Cour.de l'Europe	9-24-86	10-22-86	28	12-18-86*		Siouville
6th Cour.de New York	11- 6-86	12-27-86	51			Joubert

* Data compiled by L.Dubus for L'Orient and by R.Rousselin for Le Havre, and not yet corraborated by documentation found in the U.S.

** Departure dates advertised in New York papers.

C. Under the 2nd Regie. Departures from Le Havre.

(Packets designated by numbers)

Packet	Depart. Le Havre	Arriv. N.York	Days	Depart. N.York	Arriv. Le Havre	Capt.
1.Les Deux Freres*	2-17-87*	4- 4-87 no name reported	6 wks.		5-26-87*	Aboville
3.Cour.de l'Orient (7th voyage)	3-27-87*	5-20-87 reported as FORTUNE			7-10-87*	De Coet-nemprun
7.Cour.de l'Europe (8th voyage)	5-11-87	6-25-87	45	7-25-87 **	8-29-87	Fournier
9.Cour.de New York (7th voyage)	6-27-87	8-28-87 reported as Pack.# 9	62		10- ?-87*	De Rouge-mont
2.Marechal de Castries (1st voyage)	8-10-87*	between 9-21 and 24-87			12- 9-87*	Couari-doue
7.Cour.de l'Europe (9th voyage)	9-25-87	between 11-13 and 15-87		12-21-87 **	2- ?-88*	Fournier
1."New Packet" No name*	11-11-87*	1-30-88 no name reported			3- ?-88*	Caou-doule (?)
2.Marechal de Castries (2ne voyage)	12-29-87*	4- 8-88				
3.Cour.de l'Orient (8th voyage)	2-27-88*	4-17-88*		** 5-25-88 reported as LA FORTUNE	6-24-88*	
9.Cour.de New York* (8th voyage)	4- 8-88*	5-23-88 reported as ALLIGATOR				De Rouge-mont

French Packet Voyages by Year, Crossing and Ship.

	L'Orient to New York				Le Havre to New York		
	1783	1784	1785	1786	1787	1788	Total
Courier de l'Europe	1	2	2	2	2		9
Courier de l'Amerique	1	2	1				4
Courier de Port Louis	1	shipwrecked					1
Courier de New York	1	1	2	2	1	1	8
Courier de l'Orient		3	1	2	1	1	8
Warwick		2	1				3
Sylphe		1					1
Martinique		1	1				2
Deux Freres					1		1
Marechal de Castries					2		2
Unnamed Packet # 1					1		1
Total	4	12	8	6	8	2	40

	New York to l'Orient				New York to le Havre		
	'83	'84	'85	'86	'87	'88	Total
*Courier de l'Europe	1	2	1	3	2		9
*Courier de l'Amerique		2	2				4
*Courier de New York		2	2	1	1	1	8
Courier de l'Orient		2	2	2	1	1	8
Warwick		2	1				3
Sylphe		1					1
Martinique			2				2
Deux Freres					1		1
Marechal de Castries					1	1	2
Unnamed Packet # 1						1	1
Total	1	11	10	6	1	6	4	39

* Only some letters carried by these Packets are known to have been postmarked with the ship's name in New York.

Handling and Routing the Mail.

The Royal decree which established the Packet Line under the first Regie directed that all mail from France addressed to the United States was to be carried exclusively by the packet ships. Starting in 1786 and later under the 2nd Regie some transatlantic mail has been carried by private vessels, mainly American, though no official regulations seem to have formalized such a change.

Postage for letters directed to America and carried by French packets was to be prepaid to New York and it was recommended to dispatch them 10 to 15 days prior to the scheduled ship departures, e.g. prior to the 3rd Tuesday of each month under the first Regie. Starting in 1787 departures took place at 6 weeks interval on the 10th and on the 25th following the first sailing on February 10th. All mail originating from or addressed to inland towns used to be routed through the General Post Office in Paris.

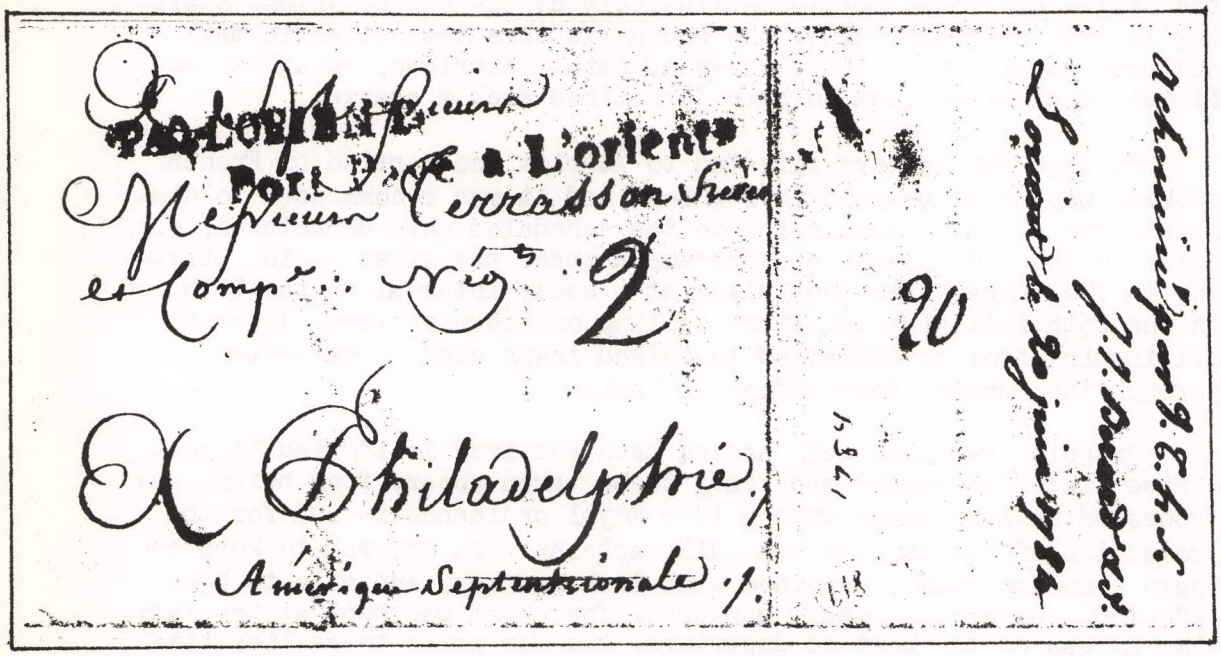
Outgoing overseas mail having been received in L'Orient's post office (later Le Havre) and ready to be taken aboard from hereon was processed in accordance with a 1773 Royal ordinance issued for the protection of the mail at sea. All captains were ordered to keep on board a wooden chest, provided with lock and key, and able to hold 1200-1500 letters and small packages. The chest was kept at the Maritime Bureau of the port of departure. One day prior to sailing time the post office transferred the mail to the chest which was then locked and sealed by a deputy commissioner in the captain's presence, who kept the key. Then an affidavit was prepared and signed by both the captain and the deputy commissioner, and the chest was carried on board.

A typical example of a maritime letter from St. Quentin in France to Philadelphia is depicted in figure G-8. It was handled by a forwarder in L'Orient and was the 2nd copy of a letter earlier posted and carried by a different packet. Such duplication was quite normal, sailing ships quite often being subject to mishaps which considerably delayed their arrival, or to accidents affecting their cargo. It is interesting to note that the name of that letter's addressee is followed by three dots forming a triangle, a membership emblem of the Freemasons who played an important role in the XVIIth century French "age of enlightenment".

Apparently the French Packet Line publicized its services throughout Europe since pieces of Dutch and Italian correspondence destined for the United States were routed via L'Orient (figures G-8, 9 and 11).

The new Packet Line was not welcomed with enthousiasm by the commercial community on the French Atlantic coast. Merchants voiced their protests via the several Chambers of Commerce, against high overseas postage rates particularly since they ahd to pay no postage at all previously. The transatlantic charges were considered a nuisance taxation, particularly when duplicate or triplicate copies were being sent - and were to be taken aboard departing packets by "the slow

and deathly circuit of the Post Office". (g-8) Thus, in spite of strict government regulations, some captains of private vessels continued carrying "unofficial" letters.



G-8. St. Quentin, May 23, 1784 to Philadelphia, arrival September 10. Forwarded by J.J.Berard by "Courrier de l'Orient on July 31, though received by him on June 30. The letter is headed "Duplicata". Original probably handled by the same forwarder and carried by the "Courrier de New York", which left June 29. Marked PAQ.L'ORIENT and "Port Payé a L'orient*", a marking which to the author's knowledge has not been catalogued before. Rated 2 dwts. for New York-Philadelphia. On reverse 20 sous ocean rate. (From the author's collection).

Conditions of mail conveyance to America as established in 1783 did not substantially vary under the second Regie. The December, 1786 decree, reorganizing and extending the services of the packets to the colonies, did not bring any change in the American service, except a reduction of scheduled voyages and a lowe maritime postal rate. As a consequence of this reduced transatlantic time table American ships departing from French ports were now more often entrusted with letters addressed to the United States (figure G-11 and -12).

In spite of different Ordinances, it is known that not all mail shipped via L'Orient was carried by the Royal packets, though stamped PAQ.L'ORIENT. It is probable that when packets were unavailable

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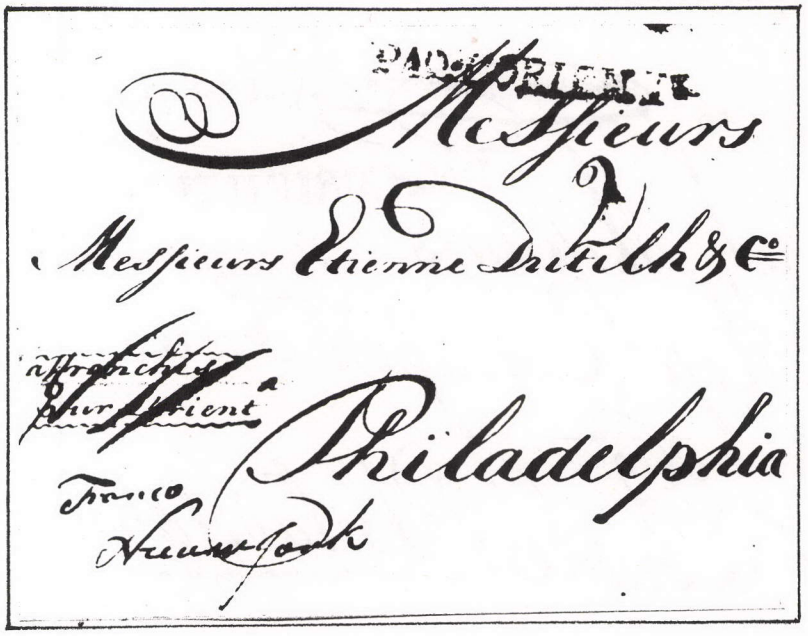
(g-8) Leon Dubus, ibid, p. 211.



G-9. Rotterdam, Holland, August 4, 1785, by the 4th COURIER DE NEW YORK, via L'Orient and New York, November 13 to Philadelphia, arrival November 15. Manuscript rate 2 dwts. New York - Philadelphia. "Affranchis pour L'Orient" (Paid to L'Orient) replaced by "Franco Nieuw York" (Dutch) shows full prepayment made in the Netherlands. Transit marking PAQ.L'ORIENT in black. (From the author's collection).

for a scheduled departure, specially after 1786, letters fully prepaid to America were carried across the ocean by private vessels. Such a solution could not harm the French postal system because it received the same amount of postage. But a faster passage of the mail was assured.

A letter from Amsterdam addressed to New York (figure G-13) was apparently carried by a private ship. According to the prevailing American rate regulations the letter was rated 2 d.

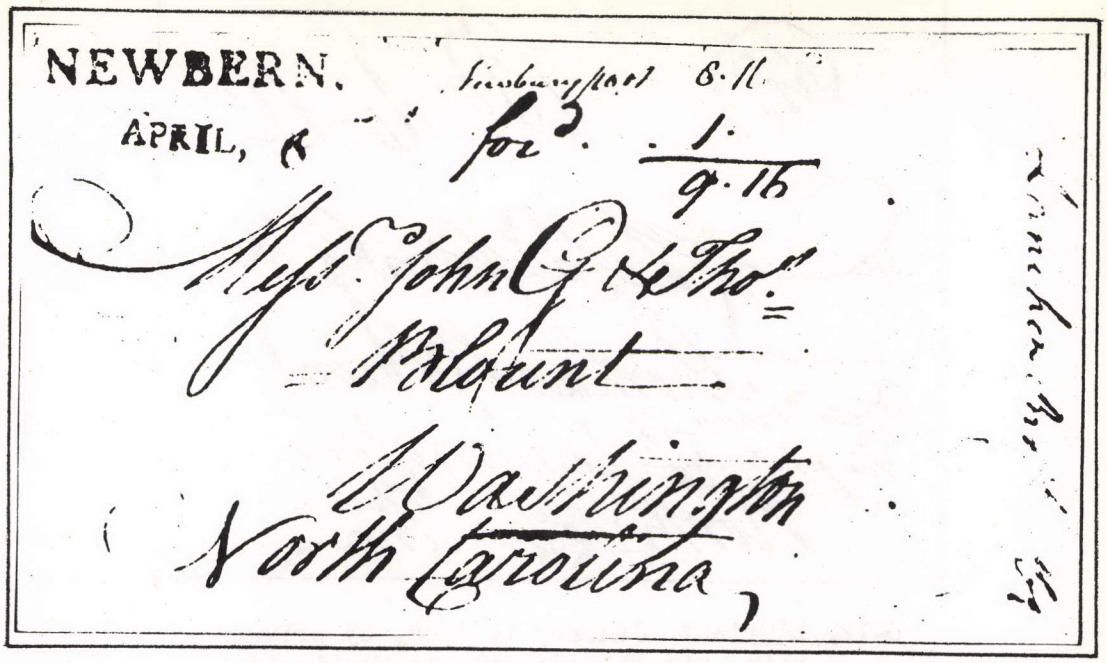
Upon arrival of a French packet in New York the mail was delivered to the post office, except consular dispatches and "exempt" letters (g-9).

(g-9) Exempt from American postal regulations were letters containing documents related to the ship's cargo or to the Packet line service.

G-10. Leghorn (State of Tuscany, Italy), by the 4th COURIER DE NEW YORK, via L'Orient, September 30, 1785 and New York to Philadelphia, receive November 15. Handstamped on front P.P.P.P. (Port Payé Par Paris, or Prepaid via Paris) and PAQ.L'ORIENT, both in black. Rated 2 dwts. for New York-Philadelphia. On reverse 38 sous prepaid French inland and transatlantic postage. (C.W.Shafer).

Packet arrivals were quite unpredictable, the crossings taking from less than four to more than ten weeks, depending upon weather and sea. Contemporary New York papers usually gave a full account of accidents at sea, but often neglected to record the safe arrivals. Often the local papers made reference to a three times per week notation from Captain Bradford's Log Book. He was the owner of Bradford's Coffee House which advertised its facilities in the Independent Journal and General Advertise as follows:

> "All masters of vessels arriving in this Port are hereby informed that the subscriber who keeps the New York Coffee-House, has prepared a Book in which he will insert the names of such as may please to call on him the



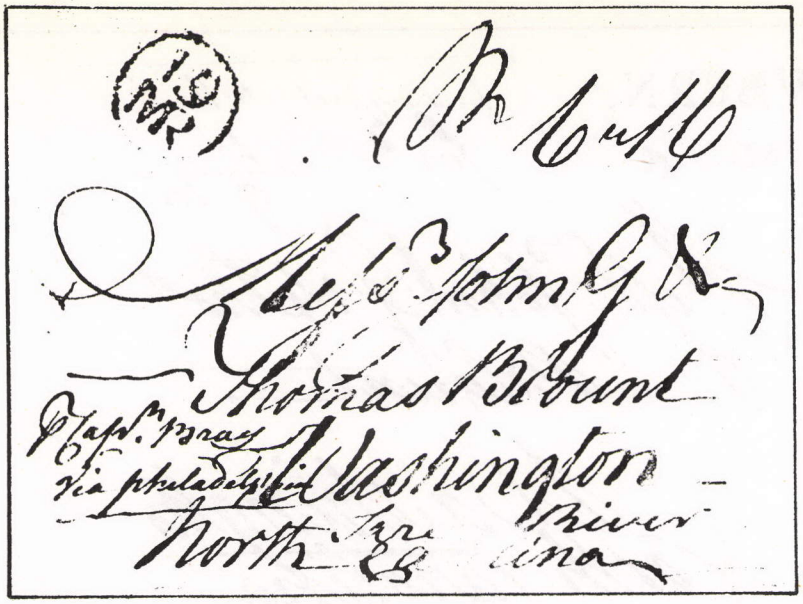
G-11. L'Orient, September 10, 1787, by private ship to Newburyport, Mass, via NEWBERN, black, 37 x 5, to Washington, N.C., APRIL 6. "Sh" marking missing. Rated Newburyport-Newbern 8 dwts. 16 gr. Forwarded to Washington 1 dwt. Total postage 9 dwts. 16 gr. It is interesting to note that this amount of 1 dwt. was the new rate which was effective April 5th, 1788 (Congress Resolution October 20, 1787). Two days earlier the addressee would have been charged 1 dwt. 8 gr. in stead of 1 dwt. (North Carolina States Archives).

name of their vessels, the port from whence they came and other particular occurences of their voyages, in order that the Gentlemen of this city or Travellers, may obtain the earliest intelligence thereof: Particular care will be taken in the delivery of all such letters as may be entrusted to his care.

Cornelius Bradford."

Though letters posted in France with American destinations could only be carried by the Royal Packets, the Decree establishing the French Line authorized the transportation of United States' mail to Europe either by the King's Packets (G-6 and G-7) or by private ships if available (figure G-15). The only restriction was that all letters so carried were to be delivered to the postmaster at the port of arrival in France who would charge the addressee for the payment of full transatlantic and overland postages.

An early advertisement in the New York Journal and Advertiser

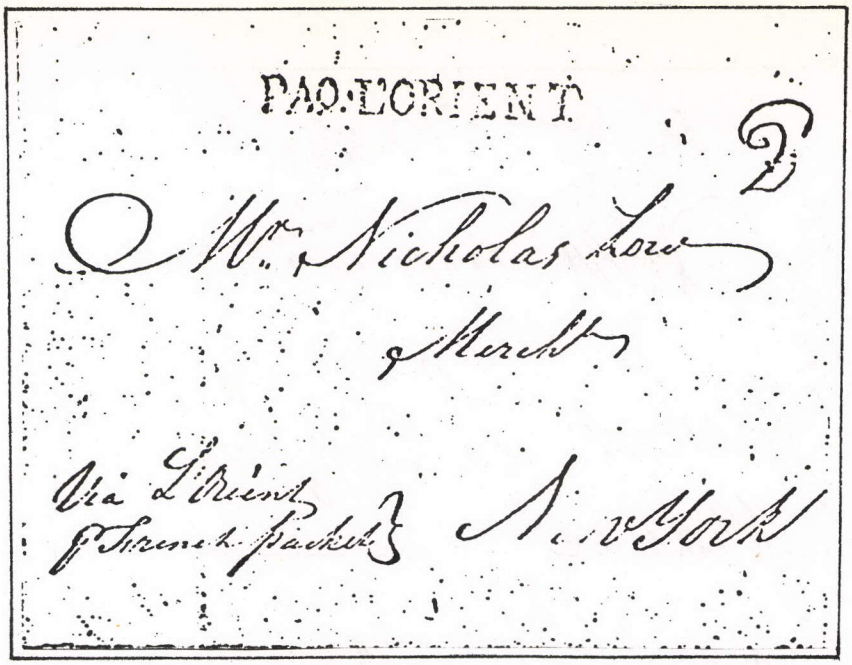


G-12. L'Orient, January 1, 1788, by private ship, via Philadelphia to Washington, N.C. Bishop mark 19/M(A)R(CH) of Philadelphia. Ship letter rate 6 dwts. 16 gr. (North Carolina State Archives).

"His most Christian Majesty's Packet Le Courier de l'Amerique commanded by le Chevalier d'Aboville will sail for the port of L'Orient on or before the 15th of January next. Letters to go in her mail are received at the Post Office of this City only ..."

Other post offices than the one in New York may not have been aware of the new and direct Packet Line with France. Therefore it was not surprising that the French Consul in New York, in charge of the Packets, found it of value to organize a letter carrying service which was advertised in the Boston Gazette and Country Journal of May 31, 1784 (figure G-16). After describing the services offered by the Royal French Packet Line the announcement said:

"... as the American postage is treble to what it is in Europe, the Subscriber hereby informs the public that if the letters are collected into a bundle and sent by the Providence stage to Mr. Samuel Chase of that town (New York), the subscriber has taken such measures as that the public may depend on those letters being duly and punctually forwarded to him by means of the Captains of the Providence packet-boats, who have engaged to deliver them to him as soon as they arrive in New-York, and that the same will be immediately put into the mail, with the utmost care."



G-13. Amsterdam, the Netherlands, August 3, 1786, by private ship to New York via L'Orient. Transit marking PAQ.L'ORIENT in black. New York rate 2d. for deliver in port of arrival. (From the authors's Collection).

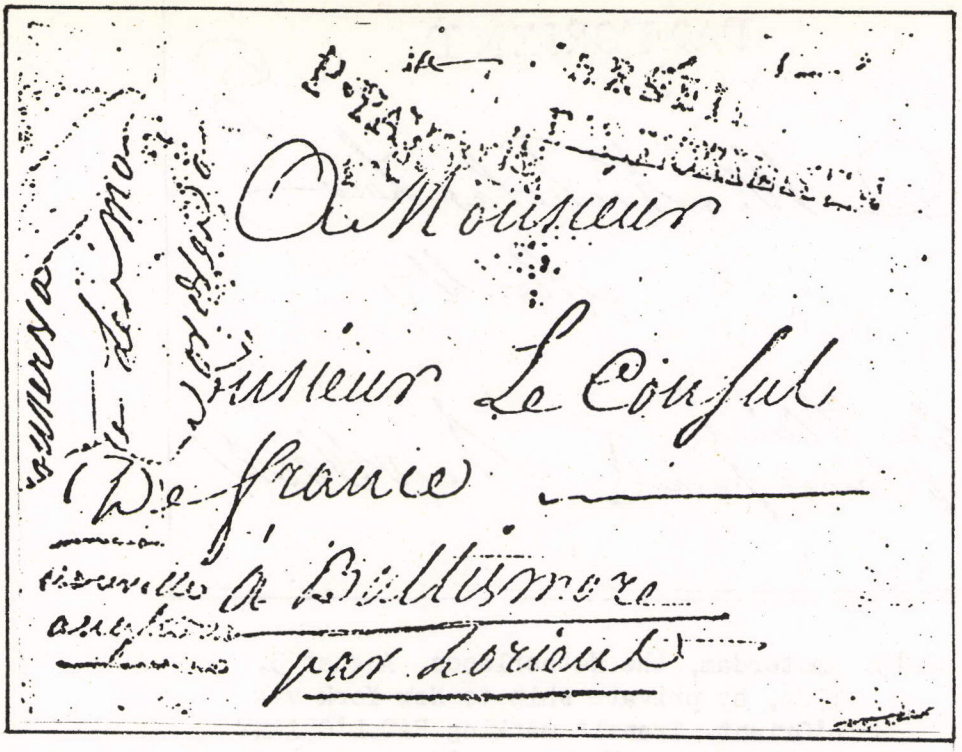
The immediate result of the Boston paper's advertisement was an inquiry in the Congress and the appointment of a Committee to:

> "... to take into Consideration an advertisement signed by St.John agent for the French packet boats." (g-10)

On July 12, 1784 the Committee reported that:

> "... the said advertisement is an open avowal of an intention to contravene an ordinance of the Congress for regulating the post-office of these United States; and that the measures therein mentioned, and said ti have beentaken by the said St.John, are a flagrant violation of the same ordinance, as well on his part as on others said to be concerned with him; will greatly injure the revenue of the post-office, and, if not prevented, may defeat that useful institution. That therefore the postmaster general be furnished with a copy of the advertisement referred to, and ordered immediately to make enquiry into this matter, and if he should find that the said ordinance hath been violated in con-

(g-10) Journals of Congress, July 1784, pp. 584-5.



G-14. MARSEILLES, January 29, 1786, via L'Orient and New York to Baltimore by the 5th COURIER DE L'ORIENT, arrival New York April 16. P.PAYE, prepaid. P.P.P.P., prepaid via Paris. PAQ. L'ORIENT, port of embarkation (departure February 16). 2 dwts. rate New York-Baltimore. (C.W.Shafer).

sequence of the abovementioned advertisement, that he cause the offenders to be prosecuted according to Law."

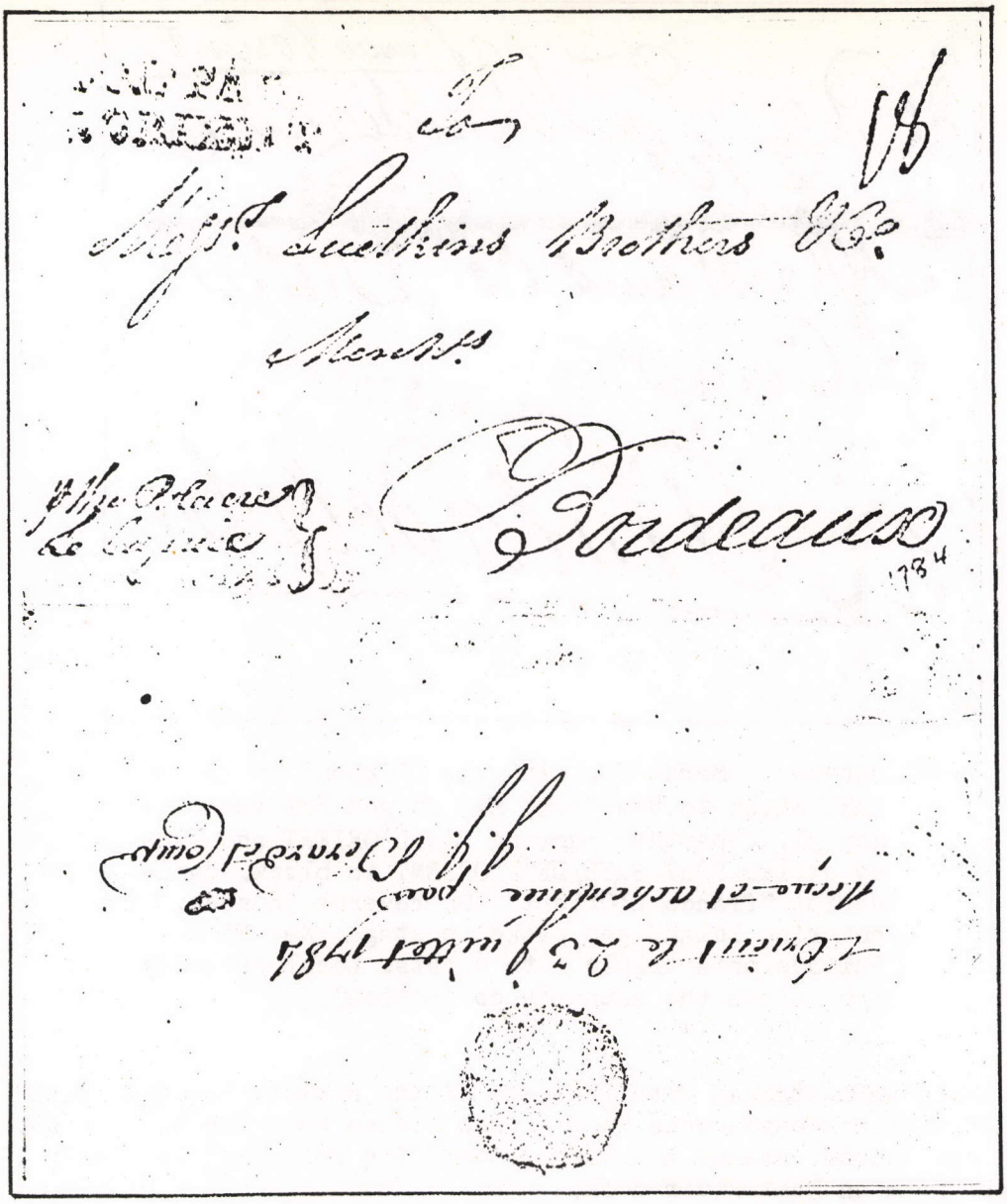
It was resolved that "the Committee of the States agree to the said report".

It is unknown whether the Postmaster General found evidence that postal rules actually had been violated. However, because of the often slow-moving postal service, high rates and a general laxity in the observation of laws, privately carried mail was not unknown. Therefore it is understandable that the Agent for the French Packet Line, while trying to promote its services, attempted to (and in certain cases probably did) speed up the collection as well as the delivery of mail carried on his ships.

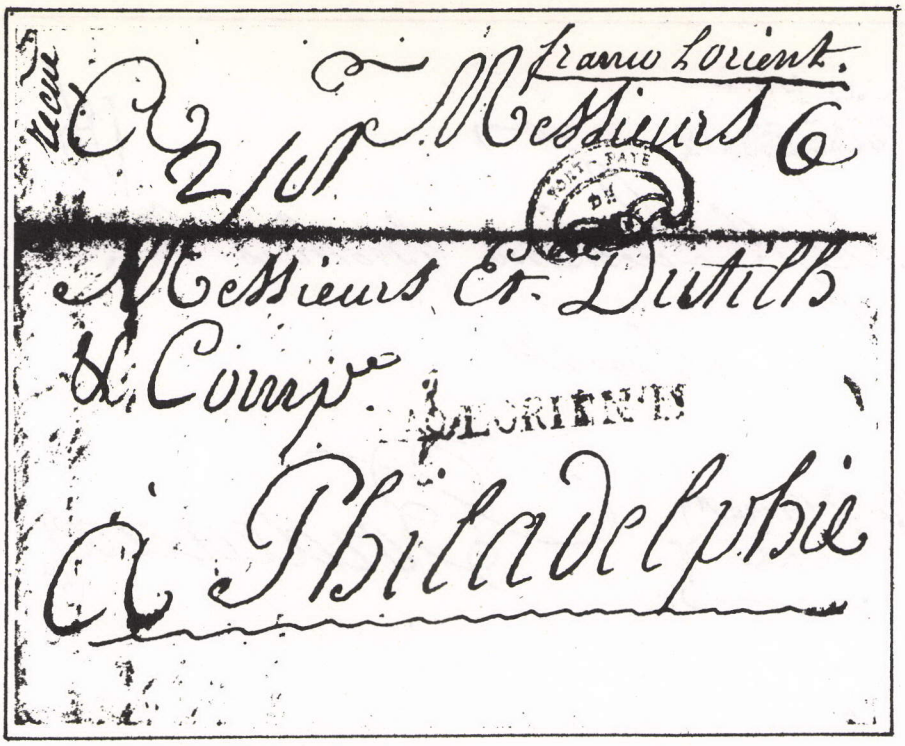
From the New York post office (g-11) the mail was transferred to the French Consulate (g-12) where, as it appears, it was only oc-

(g-11) The post office was at 38 Smith St. and was moved to 4 Queen St. in April 1784.

(g-12) The French Consulate was located at 20 Maiden Lane.



G-15. Philadelphia, May 25, 1784 to Bordeaux, arrived July 29. Carried by a polacre or polacca (three masted vessel) LE CAPRICE to L'Orient, where stamped COL.PAR/L'ORIENT in black. For mail carried by private ship the captain was paid 2 sous upon delivery to the French post office. Inland postage 18 sous, paid by addressee, represents double sheet letter rate from L'Orient to Bordeaux, a distance of approinately 110 French lieues or 270 miles. (From the author's collection).



G-17. Bordeaux, March 22, 1785 via L'Orient by the 2nd MARTINIQUE to New York, May 28 and Philadelphia, May 31. Departure marking PAQ.L'ORIENT and fancy strike PORT-PAYE/DE/L'ORIENT in black. Manuscript "franco L'Orient". On reverse 38 sous, covering inland and packet postage. New York-Philadelphia triple rate 6 dwts. Local currency 2/6. (From the author's collection).

casionally hand-stamped with the name of the Packet. Together with the official correspondence it was then placed into the mail chest, which was locked, sealed and taken aboard the ship that was ready to sail from an East River dock.

Postal Rates (g-13).

In spite of several attempts no postal treaty could be concluded between France and the United States. The French were anxious to give their correspondents the choice between prepayment of the transatlantic postage or leaving it to the addressee to pay for it. The United States was reluctant to accept such a system. With reference to a French porposal of November, 1785 Ebenezer Hazard, the Postmaster General made the following statement on February 16, 1786:

> "I have under consideration the proposed 'Plan of a Treaty for Correspondance of letters between

(g-13) These rates refer to French maritime and overland mail. Details regarding American postage rates and postal regulations can be found in the Chapter on Postal Rates.

To the PUBLIC.

THE Merchants of this city, both natives and foreigners, are hereby informed, that the French government eſtabliſhed laſt Auguſt five packets, which ſail from port-L'Orient for New-York the third Wedneſday in every month (wind and weather permitting;) that they are intended to bring over to this continent, and carry back to Europe, letters, packets, paſſengers and goods; that henceforth they will ſail as near the 20th of each month as their arrival will poſſibly permit; that the freight of a ſingle letter from New-York to l'Orient is a French livre or 10d ½ ſterling; that the expence of the paſſage is 95¼ dollar or 500lb. tournais, bed, table and every thing included, with the privilege of carrying trunks to the amount of 1200wt. —that thoſe veſſels are all copper bottomed, and fitted out in the neateſt manner—that the freight of goods is 120l. per ton, or 42 cubit feet—that the letters intended to go by theſe veſſels muſt be either franked here and ſent to Col. Bedlow, Poſt-Maſter of New-York, or addreſſed to ſome correſpondent in that city.—For as the American poſtage is treble to what it is in Europe, the *Subſcriber* hereby informs the public, that if the letters are collected into a bundle and ſent by the Providence ſtage to Mr. Samuel Chace of that town, the ſubſcriber has taken ſuch meaſures as that the public may depend on thoſe letters being duly and punctually forwarded to him by means of the Captains of the Providence packet-boats, who have engaged to deliver them to him as ſoon as they arrive in New-York, and that the ſame will be immediately put into the mail, with the utmoſt care.

ST. JOHN,
(Agent for the French packet boats.

Boſton, May, 1784.

> the Post Offices of France and those of the United States of North America' and observe but one Defect in it; and that it is left optional with the Writers to pay the Postage or not; and if we may judge from Experience, they will not pay it. The Consequence will be -
>
> 1st. That a Receipt must be given by the American Office, which will make the United States accountable for the Amount of Postage.
>
> 2nd. The Letters must be distributed from New Hampshire to Georgia; and the dead (or refused) Letters returned to New York at the Risque of the United States; which will, evidently be very great, if we consider the Distances to which the Letters must travel, the Size and Situation of many of our Ferries, and our Seasons, specially the Winter.
>
> 3rd. Accounts must be kept between the American and French Post Offices which, in their very nature, must be complex and intricate, both Nations being interested in the postage of each letter, and the Postage being marked, partly in French money and partly in Pennyweights and Grains of silver; the former, not being sufficiently understood by us - will occasion many Errors and be the Source of many Confusion.
>
> We were exactly upon the above Plan with Respect to the British Packets at their first Establishment, as you will observe from enclosed Advertisement; but the Inconveniences attending it were so great that it was found necessary to make an Alteration; and the whole Business was amazingly simplified by providing that all the Packet Postage should be paid in England. By this small change in the System every Difficulty is removed; ..." (g-14).

John Jay, Foreign Secretary, concurred with the Postmaster General and a revised plan for a treaty was submitted to the Congress on March 29th but was not acted upon (g-15). Letters to the United States from France continued to be prepaid at the point of origin in France or in Europe to New York and the mail originating in America from New York to its destination was paid by the addressee on the Continent. The same system was in use for the British mail. On August 4, 1784 a Postal Treaty was signed between France and Great Britain. It had a special clause allowing for the transit

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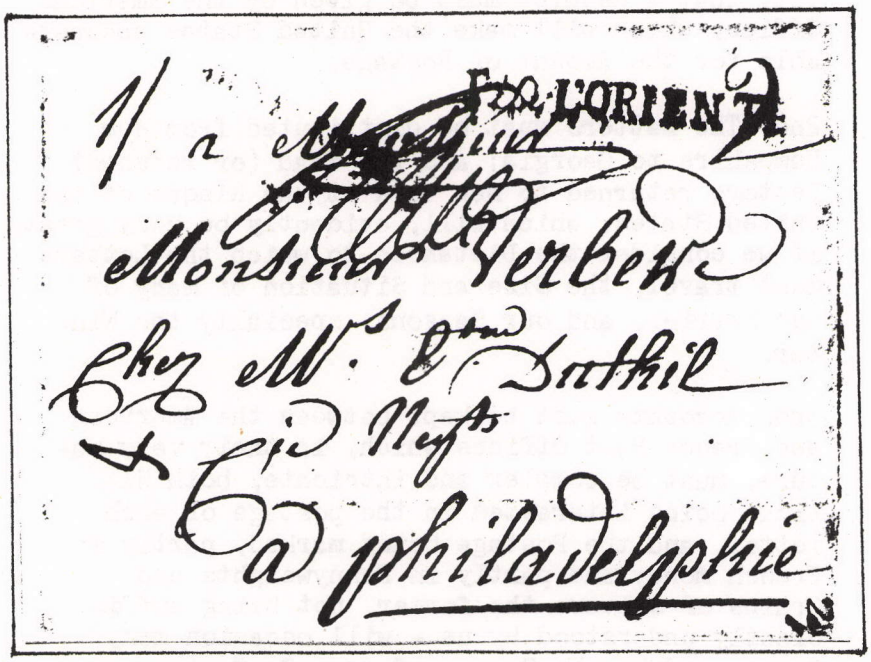
(g-14) Journal of Congress, February 1786, pp. 80-1.
(g-15) ibid March 1786, pp. 141-44.

through Britain of French and foreign mail to the United States. So far no Franco-American letters of that period have been found which were carried via England.

The Decree of June 1783 establishing the French Packet Line stipulated the following scale of ocean mail rates:



G-17. Dunkerque, undated, by last packet from L'Orient (later from Le Havre), November 6, 1786 to Philadelphia, arrival December 19. Marked in black PAQ.L'ORIENT, faintly DUNKERQUE and P.P.P.P. (Prepaid via Paris). Rated 38 sous on reverse covering French overland and transatlantic postage, 2 dwts. for New York-Philadelphia. Local currency 1/. (From author's collection).

A single letter of one ounce or less	1 livre
A single letter in an envelope of one ounce or less	1 livre 1 sou
A double letter of one ounce or less	1 livre 18 sous
Each additional ounce	2 livres

The French monetary unit at that time was a "Livre", equal to 20 sous. 20 French livres were the equivalent of 17 shillings and 6 pence sterling. Thus a livre had a value of 10½ pence or a little less than one shilling. One sou was equal to half a penny. It should

be noted that these equivalents were applicable only to gold, silver and copper coinage, and whenever paper money was involved the rates of exchange were quite different and depended upon economical and political conditions prevailing in both countries.

A slightly reduced and simplified rate schedule came into effect when the Regulations of December 28, 1786 created the 2nd Regie:

All letters of one ounce or less ..... 20 sous
Each additional ounce ..... 10 sous

A special rate for United States printed matter and newspapers addressed to France was announced on December 12, 1786, as a result of protests against the high rates of postage:

For each piece of printed matter, per ounce - 12 sous

This rate included 6 sous of transatlantic postage and the same amount for overland transportation (g-16).

In an effort to induce other European countries to take advantage of their Packet service the French promoted the new line by announcements in the newspapers.

Forwarding Agents.

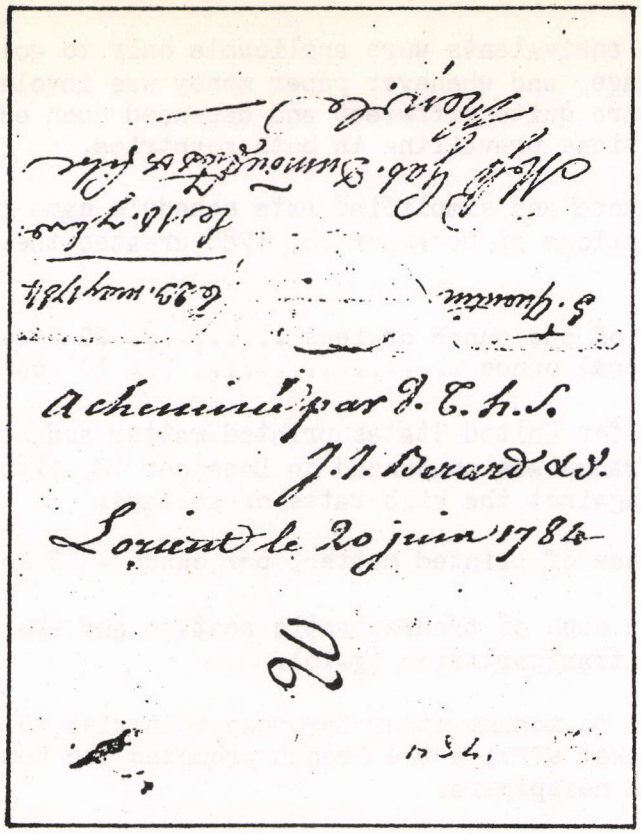
It would be impossible properly to portray the seventeenth century overseas' mail service without mentioning the helping hand of the forwarding agents. The majority of French transatlantic letters which originated from or were addressed to the interior were handled by such agents in port and border cities. They usually were well-known business men or respected citizens. Many of them took forwarding as a part-time occupation. Often they had direct access to the post office where they were authorized to pick up their correspondents' mail and to pay postage or prepay further conveyance on behalf of them when required.

In L'Orient two forwarders' names are noted: Cuming and Moriarty (Part II, figure PA 19) and J.J.Berard at Comp. (figure G-17a) The assistance of a forewarder was often of considerable value with regard to safety and speed if letters coming from the interior were sent to them under cover. In many cases this would result in shorter routes and lower postage, because otherwise such letters without exception would be routed via the general post office in Paris.

Postal Markings.

Covers carrying postal markings in conjunction with the French mail packets of the 1783-1788 period are very hard to find.

(g-16) E. Vaillé: Histoire Générale des Postes Françaises. Vol. VI, p. 135.



G-17a. Letter from France to Philadelphia via L'Orient, forwarded by J.J.Berard, June 20, 1784 to New York by the COURIER DE L'ORIENT.

Saint-Jean deCrevecoeur (St. John), the French Consul in New York, who was in charge of the administration of the French packets in the United Sattes, in one of his reports wrote:

> "... all letters were to be stamped in red with the name of the Packet and the date of their departure from France as well as from the United States." (g-17) (figure G-24)

The Consul added that he had made these hand stamps in New York and had forwarded duplicates to L'Orient. He also stated that he did not understand why they were not used in spite of the Minister of the Navy's approval. As Leon Dubus notes in his article, instructions concerning these postal markings were rarely followed.

Other hand stamped markings than these on letters originating from or passing through L'Orient, and later Le Havre, have been

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(g-17) E. Vaillé: ibid. p.671.

used. However, no such markings applied by the New York post office on mail carried by the French packets have been seen so far, with the exception of those with the usual manuscript rate markings.

Between 1784 and 1788 the following markings were in use by the French on transatlantic mail to and form New York.

From France.

Embarkation postmark (1784-1786)

PAQ·L'ORIENT

Figure G-18

known in black on letters sent overseas originating from or passing via L'Orient.

Prepaid Transatlantic Postage (1784)

Port Paye à L'orient

Figure G-19

known in black, used together with PAQ.L'ORIENT for prepaid ocean postage at L'Orient.

Prepaid Transatlantic Postage (1785)

Figure G-20

known in black together with PAQ.L'ORIENT for ocean and overland prepaid postage at inland origins.

From New York.

Packet's Name and Port of Embarkation (1784).

LeCourierdel'Amerique

NewYork

Figure G-21

known in red on a letter from Philadelphia dated January 6, 1784, addressed to Bordeaux. A second letter is reported to carry the same strike in black. (g-18)

Packet's Name (1784).

LeCourierdeNewYork

Figure G-22

known in black on a letter from New York on March 16, 1784, which probable left March 20th. (g-18)

Packet's Name, Port of Embarkation and Date of Departure (1785).

LeCourierdel'EUROPE.

New York*16 juin 1785

Figure G-23

Reproduced in "La Poste aux Lettres et les Marques Postales en Belgique de 1648 à 1849" by Lucien Harlant.

Packet's Name and Port of Embarkation (1785).

LeCourierdel'Amerique

-NewYork.

Figure G-24

Reproduced in the "Catalogue des Estampilles" Same design as figure G-21, except for 2 stars an wider spacing.

Port of Embarkation (1787-1788).

PAQ·NEWYORK

Figure G-25

known in black on letters carried from New York to Le Havre.

Transit Postmark (1787).

NEW· YORCK
PAR LE HAVRE

Figure G-26

Known in red together with marking of figure G-21; both on packet letters from New York to destinations other than Le Havre. (g-18)

The well-known markings COL.PAR/L'ORIENT and COL.PAR/LE HAVRE were applied on incoming overseas mail from the colonies as well as from the United States on letters carried by the Royal Packets (figure G-6) or by private ships (figure G-15).

This listing of Packet markings is not expected to be complete. There is little doubt that others were used and will be found. The whole subject presents an interesting fiels of investigation and research for the specialist in Transatlantic Mail.

Historic Events.

The first packet, the COURIER DE L'EUROPE was ready to sail from the port of L'Orient on September 17, 1783. Leon Dubus in his publication tells how Hector St-John de Crevecoeur, French Consul in New York, and another passenger on this inaugural voyage, requested that the ship's sailing be delayed until the arrival of Mr. Thatcher, secretary to Samuel Adams, who was carrying the Definitive Peace Treaty, signed by Great Britain and ready for ratification by the Congress. Since the King had ordered that the packets always should leave on schedule, the request was turned down and the COURIER DE L'EUROPE sailed on the 18th. One day later the American envoy and the precious document he carried arrived in L'Orient. In view of the importance of his mission it was decided to ship out without delay the WARWICK for Mr. Thatcher's convenience. However, a south wind prevented the WARWICK from leaving its mooring and the same wind compelled the COURIER DE L'EUROPE to return to the Bay de Groix. This allowed Mr. Thatcher and his Peace Treaty to be transferred to the COURIER DE L'EUROPE, which finally was able to sail on the 26th.

Tragedy struck the 3rd packet, the COURIER DE PORT LOUIS, on her way to New York as reported by a local newspaper on January 24, 1784:

> "We are sorry to inform the public that on the 19th inst. the French packet LE COURIER DE PORT-LOUIS, Captain Tuvache bound to this port,

(g-18) R. Rousselin: L'Acheminement des Correspondances entre Le Havre et les Pays d'Outre-Mer, p. 53.

> was unfortunately in the late severed storm cast away on Long Island and several of her hands perished."

The shipwreck occurred near Jones' Inlet on Long Island. Fourteen crew members and two passengers out of a total of 6 lost their lives. It seems, however, that, if not the complete, mail was saved.

The Next packet, the COURIER DE NEW YORK left L'Orient on December 17, 1783. She ran into heavy storms before reaching New York. A newspaper report of February 4, 1784 read as follows:

> "We have the pleasure to inform the public that after enduring the severest distress, the packet "Le Courier de New York" has from the indefatigable exertions of Captain Joubert and faithful seamen been sislodged from the most eminent dangers and a pilot on board is now on the passage up our East River."

On her trip back to France this ship carried the survivors of the COURIER DE PORT LOUIS. It left New York on March the 20th.

A tenporary replacement for the lost ship is cited by Leon Dubus to have been the SYLPHE which left L'Orient on March 16. She arrived on April 28 and returned from New York on May 24.

The second return of the COURIER DE L'EUROPE was announced in a New York newspaper on June 12, 1784. The French Consul incorporated in it the following warning:

> "... letters are conveyed by means of French packets to every part of Europe but those for Great Britain and Ireland must (until further notice) be sent enclosed to a correspondent in France to be forwarded without which precaution they will lay in the general Post Office in London."

A postal treaty between France and Great Britain with regard to the transfer of packet mail to and from America became effective on August 4, 1784.

From its beginning until May 1785 the French Packet Line maintained an almost unfailing schedule. By then delays started to occur. After 12 sailings in 1784 only 8 voyages were made the next year, and 6 in 1786. Breakdowns, diversion of some ships to the colonial service, delays in repairs and provisioning created slowdowns which became even worse due to political unrest, which particularly affected Brittany where L'Orient is located and where French peasants were "resisting law" and had to be pacified by the military.

The creation of the 2nd Regie in December 1786 designated Le Havre as the home port for the ships of the North Atlantic packet service in stead of L'Orient. At the same time it was decided to build several new ships probably with the idea of further developing the trade between the two countries. However, political developments prevented France from carrying out such plans.

Eight sailings were made in 1787 and two more in 1788. By then events leading to the French Revolution were in full progress and public opinion in America quickly changed against the French.

Leon Dubus, in his study of the packet services notes that a project for a 3rd Regie with six ships sailing from Bordeaux to Norfolk and New York was proposed by a shipbuilder from Saint Malo, named Dubois. This private venture was approved by the French government on March 1, 1789, but according to Dubus the United States withheld their approval. Only one officially sponsored ship, the JEAN-JACQUES, left Bordeaux on May 15, 1789. This was the last effort in trying to establish a regular French Packet Line. An American citizen, writing from L'Orient to Boston at the time when the COURIER DE NEW YORK made her final voyage home from New York, said in his letter:

> "In this unfortunate and unhappy country we cannot depend upon any thing; the King is now at war with his subjects, and there are many regiments of infantry that have refused to serve him against their country. The peasantry begin to collect in formidable bodies, and have offered a large reward for the head of the Intendant of the City of Rennes, who has had the good luck to escape. Every thing at present seems to have a melancholy aspect; the minds of people are much irritated. This has continued these three months and we do not know when and how it will end. Thus we behold the consequences of a bad administration !".

Relations between France and the United States entered a period of high tension. Public opinion in this country believed an armed confrontation to be imminent. Commercial relations dropped to a new low. Both the United States and Britain increased thier mail-carrying packet services thus gaining a competitive advantage which lasted well into the nineteenth century.

Note: The author would be very thankful for any additional information from collectors possessing maritime covers or letters to or from France and pertaining to the 1783-1788 period. Please contact: M.W.Martin, 290 West End Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10023.

Addendum.

Tow days before the book's manuscript was made ready for shipment to the printers the author of this Chapter submitted a facsimile of a French packet postmark, which had never been reported before on a cover. It was found on a letter posted from Philadelphia on April 26, 1784, which must have sailed from New York on or about April 28. At that late moment the sailing date could still be incorporated in the Table of French Packet voyages of page G-13.

Unfortunately no copy of the whole cover could be obtained for reproduction in this book. Since the original is the property of a collector in Germany waiting for such a copy would have delayed the publication of this volume. However, a tracing of the interesting marking is depicted on this page.

It proves that each one of the four ships operating between L'Orient and New York during that period used at one time its own stamp.

The face of the cover carries the date mark "26 AP" and a hand-stamped imprint "PAID".

Courier de L'Orient

New York

O-27. Reported by Warner Münzberg of the Deutscher Altbriefsammler Verein.

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(g-19) Not included are publications on general Postal History of America.

H. William Giles Goddard,
Printer, Patriot, Activist and Organizer of the first Constitutional Postal System.

Alvin R. Kantor

One of the first breaks with England prior to the Revolutionary War was the establishment of an independent postal system, planned and carried out by William Giles Goddard. The creation of this postal system along constitutional lines, that of Goddard's, took place in Benjamin Franklin's absence and perhaps could never have come about had Franklin been at home "watching the store".

William G. Goddard was born in New London, Connecticut on October 20, 1740. At twenty he opened his first printing shop and two years later began publishing his first newspaper, "The Providence Gazette and Country Journal". In 1765 he gave up his venture and moved to Philadelphia, then the largest city in the colonies with a population of around 30,000 people. By 1768 he was in the publishing business again with his "Pennsylvania Chronicle". Soon he was to feel the inequities under the British post office system. It had complete control over everything that moved on the post roads. If, for example, the editorial policy of a newspaper did not agree with those in authority then the distribution of the paper could be curtailed and a subscription list made worthless. Worse yet, from a communication point of view, the news and events of one colony were not available to the people in another colony. Much was happening in Boston, New York, Lexington and Concord. Yet a citizen of Philadelphia would know little of the events in these important centers unless their newspaper had national news available to them. Despite the handicaps of the time Goddard was able to build the Chronicle's circulation into the largest of any paper in pre-revolutionary days. The question may be asked at this point: what prompted Goddard to take on the British postal system and turn his action into a cause célèbre ? After all this was sedition !

Could the reason have been an economic one ? As a publisher of a newspaper he perhaps more than many others felt the inequities built into the Queen Anne law of 1711. While the Act of the Ninth was meant to "regularize" the postal system and it worked reasonably well where letters were concerned under Franklin's deputy general postmastership, the laws failed to make provisions for the carrying of newspapers by the post. Rates for them could be arbitrarily fixed and be set so high as to make the distribution prohibitive unless the publisher wished to send the papers at letter rate. The other option was to organize his own system of distribution outside the colonial or parliamentary system. This would involve the hiring of post riders, the establishment of distribution centers or post offices, a substantial outlay of capital and all the other minor and major details in setting up a competive postal system. He would also need the help and patronage of persons all along the postal way.

On the other hand could Goddard's reason for wanting a substitute for the existing system have been prompted by his personal feelings toward Benjamin Franklin ? They knew each other over the years, their paths had crossed many times. Franklin had published and later sold one of the leading Philadelphia newspapers. He had achieved recognition by being appointed in 1753 one of the two deputy postmasters general, jointly with William Hunter, while Goddard had yet to prove himself. It has been hinted that Franklin had had a hand in promoting the detested Stamp Act and foistering it on the colonists. As a result the heavy tax on imported newsprint could only have served to hurt Goddard. Had not he and his sister signed a bond to make good on a debt that Goddard had incurred while postmaster in Providence ? The bond, standard for the time, provided that if the sum of sixty pounds was not paid within six months it was to be doubled and then six months later doubled again. Goddard must have felt the sting of being indebted to Franklin. The debt, incidentally, was never paid and was willed to

Franklin's son-in-law, William Bache, when he died. Goddard just was not fond of Franklin and perhaps did not approve of the way the man ran the postal system.

Then again one could examine Goddard's temperament and character, whether this inane quality to achieve and succeed was apparent, He was always a restless person, a man of uneven temper. It did not take much for him to loose his "cool". His quafrels were always tempestuous. There never seemed to be a minor disagreement. Should anyone oppose him he would take to his newspaper columns and publicly attack him. He was sure to antagonize those he would come in contact with. At least this can be said of his earlier years, the period of his historical accomplishments. He was always out to prove himself, to show that he was the superior newspaperman and publisher, the great patriot and expert postmaster. Compromise was never overworked where Goddard was concerned. In all fairness to the man's reputation it should be stated that in his many pursuits he appeared to be capable, but that in the main his approach to people imperious.

On the other hand had there been anyone other than Franklin on the postal scene it is more than likely that Goddard would have been known as the father of the American postal system instead of Franklin, and he would have enjoyed a more coveted place in history. Yet each time he had something to offer the timing was bad. He was the proverbial right man at the wrong time. He could see the faults of the postal system under its existing administration. When events did not go right in his opinion he was ready to speak out, many times without regard to the consequences. In a dispute over a public statement involving the Whig Club after his return to Baltimore its membership fr-cided as follows:

> "In Whig Club March 4, 1777.
>
> Resolved, that Mr. William Goddard do leave this town by twelve o'clock tomorrow morning, and the County within three days ... Should he refuse due obedience to this notice, he will be subject to the resentment of a
>
> Legion" (h-1)

Naturally he refused to leave and mob action ensued. It was largely through the efforts of his sister, with whom he later was to quarrel too, that he escaped with no physical harm.

Much is known about Goddard, Being a newspaperman as well as an early organizer of a postal plan he had many opportunities to record his activities in print. He lived a long life, seventy-seven years, it covered many events recorded in early colonial history. Yet his name was eclipsed by many of the giants of his time. The one role he played for which he deserves the thanks of the nation was his esta blishment of an American postal system at a time when it was sedition to flaunt the crown's authority. For he did not hesitate to give up his publishing business, whatever his motives were, and started his propaganda tour of the colonies. the pre-revolutionary days were pe-

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(h-1) Reprinted by Goddard in the Prowness of the Whig Club. Part 1. Library of Congress.

rilous ones to live in. Besides a hard life there were many provocative issues. Many men were on the scene with many different persuasions, Each of them had his part to play, each exacted an impact on what was to culminate in the event of July 4, 1776. William Gides Goddard's role was that of bringing about a postal system to replace the one in operation, the one that caused the breakdown of the king's.

The time was ripe for Goddard to make his move. A general disregard for law and order prevailed. On every scene institutions and establishments were being attacked by persons who set the tone of the time. As far as the postal services were concerned post riders carried letters and packages outside their regular assignments and thereby violated the regulations. The lawful exemption from postage for letters which were refering to shipments of goods was fraudulently used by sea captains and other carriers of mail gave rise to serious disturbences, some times turning into mob action. To this chaotic situation within the postal system and the resulting drop in revenue was added the fact that one of the deputy postmasters general, Benjamin Franklin, was in England during most of the time and could not give the royal system the attention that was so badly needed.

Then Goddard acted. In a first reference in his Maryland Journal of 1773 he called for a "Consitutional Post Office". His use and meaning of the word "constitutional" probably arose from Samuel Adams writing in the Massachusetts Circular Letter of 1768. Adams wrote:

> "... that in all free States the Constitution is fixed; and as the supreme Legislative derives its Power and Authority from the Constitution, it cannot overleap the Bounds of it without destroying its own foundation. If one wishes to be truly free there has to be a fix on certain regulations which if we please we may call a constitution, as the standing measure of the proceedings of government." (h-2)

Like John and Samuel Adams Goddard had seen the vagueness of the British constitution in which institutions, rights and laws were subject to ambiguous interpretations.

Goddard attacked the parliamentary system on two grounds. In the first place there was the insecurity of the system. The mails were subject to interception and letter writers liable to the wrath of the British criminal code should they preach subversion. (h-3)

(h-2) Gordon S. Wood: The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787.

(h-3) To prove the correctness of this statement the following is quoted from General Thomas Gage's instructions to vice admiral Samuel Groves, issued at Boston, April 23, 1775, as recorded in editor William Bell Clark's: The Naval Documents of the American Revolution (Washington, 1964):

> "When the ship is under sail and so far out, that there is no possibility of her returning; capt. Bishop to examine

Secondly Goddard attacked the system as an instrument of taxation forced upon the American people without their consent.

On February 8, 1774 Goddard published a farewell statement in his paper stating:

> "... A Matter I have engaged in, of a very interesting Nature to the common Liberties of all America, as well as myself ... as the Printer of a Public Paper, is brought nearer to a Conclusion. ... N.B. The new Constitutional Post, which under Favour of the Public, hath been lately established between this City (Philadelphia) and Baltimore, will be continued in the most regular, and punctual Manner." (h-4)

Nine days later Katherine Goddard took over the management of the paper and Goddard was off to begin his postal system. It was well-known territory to him. Over the past seven years he had carried on a fledgeling postal route as newspaper publisher between Baltimore and Philadelphia. Goddard traveled northward, his first stop was New York city where he was somewhat known, known at least to the local Committee of Correspondence that was already at work there. Evidence indicates that Goddard at this point had decided to promote his plans through the Committees of Correspondence in the different colonies. He would have to travel from colony to colony, talking up his plan, since each colony was autonomous. As yet there existed no federal system.

At the time most local town meetings were in the hands of these committees and there still was some element of confidentiality which Goddard found useful until his plan was more fully operational. The committee meetings gave the town people time and opportunity to vent their wishes for liberty and equality. Matters of imterest gathered by travelers and gossip of the time would be saved for such meetings and it is certain that many were well attended. In those days numerous exiting events occurred, consequently when Goddard left New York he was certain to have a ready ear along the way. Before reaching Boston he stopped in Newport and explained his plan. On March 10, 1774 the Newport committee advised their compatriots in Boston not only about plans for a constitutional postal system, but that Goddard brought news regarding the resumed importation of tea to America by the East India Company. The good citizens of Newport were dead-set against this trick by the British government. However, for the time being they were not quite convinced that Goddard's post office scheme was a desirable one. They preferred to defer action until Boston with its commercial interests had approved the plan. Then they would act.

> every letter on board her those directed to Docr. Franklin, Lee, Borland, etc.to be sent to Boston; any other Suspicious letter to be put under Cover to the Secretary of the State, and given to Lieut. Nun. Capn. Bishop telling his Lordship, that he was directed in this critical Juncture, to send him the Inclosed for his perusal, as they might contain som intelligence of the Rebels here."
>
> (the Coordinator).

(h-4) Ward L. Miner: William Goddard, Newspaperman. p. 114.

Isaac Smith Esqr

(133)

The *ESSEX* GAZETTE.

Containing the freſheſt Advices, both foreign and domeſtic.

VOL. VI. NUMB. 295.

From TUESDAY, *March* 15, to TUESDAY, *March* 22, 1774.

SALEM: Printed by *Samuel* and *Ebenezer Hall*, at their Printing-Office near the Town-Houſe.

BOSTON, MONDAY, *March* 21.

Extract of a letter from a Gentleman at New-York, to his friend in this town, dated Feb. 28, 1774.

"Our friend, Mr. Goddard, the bearer of this, is to leave town in a few hours for your place; on a matter of the utmoſt importance to the liberties of this country, viz. an entire abolition of the illegal and oppreſſive Poſt-Office act; a provincial ſubſcription Poſt is already eſtabliſhed between Philadelphia and Baltimore, in Maryland, ſupported by the moſt eminent merchants & other gentlemen in thoſe places—our committee of correſpondence writes to your committee, on the ſubject, recommending in the ſtrongeſt terms the propoſals which Mr. Goddard has to make and our earneſt deſire to co-operate with you and the reſt of the friends of *juſt government*, in carrying this *glorious plan* into *immediate execution*—from the information which Mr. Goddard will give you, I think, you will be convinced that, now or never, is the time; at leaſt that ſo favourable an opportunity will hardly offer as the preſent. The friends of liberty in the Southern colonies, particularly Pennſylvania, Maryland and Virginia, you may depend will eſtabliſh riders, upon the *new plan* throughout thoſe provinces, as ſoon as they obtain information of the concurrence and approbation of the town of Boſton—and will do every thing in their power to extend them to the moſt Eaſtern colonies *immediately*. That it will meet with the warmeſt approbation of the truly patriotic Boſtonians, I cannot entertain the leaſt doubt."

We hear a conſiderable fund is already raiſed for the ſupport of new Poſts at Philadelphia and Baltimore, and the citizens at New-York are determined to open ſubſcription books for the like purpoſe, as ſoon as the town of Boſton has given a ſanction to the capital deſign of annihilating that fatal precedent againſt us—the POST-OFFICE.

We hear from New-London, Norwich, Newport and Providence, that the plan for the total abolition of the Parliamentary Poſt-Office in America, by the eſtabliſhment of new *Conſtitutional* Poſts, and Poſt-Offices, in the ſeveral Colonies, meets with general approbation, and will undoubtedly be patronized by every friend to American Freedom, not only in thoſe towns, but throughout the Continent.

How chearfully will every well-wiſher to his country lay hold of an opportunity to wreſt the channel of public and private intelligence out of the hands of a power openly inimical to its Rights and Liberties. Several meetings have already been held on the intereſting ſubject, and on the morrow evening it is hoped to be concluded ſo far that Mr. Goddard may proceed Eaſtward, with a moral certainty of carrying his point throughout the Colonies.

Contemporary newspapers all over the continent, from New England to Virginia, and even the South Carolina and Georgia Gazettes, gave Goddard's revolutionary plans and promotional activities ample space in their news columns.

H-2. (From the author's collection).

Leaving Newport, Goddard traveled northward. On March 17, 1774 the Committee of Correspondence in Providence prepared a letter addressed to Boston emphasizing that the

> "... Parliament of Great Britain have no right to impose that Regulation (the postal system) on us for the purpose of Raising Revenue in America without our consent." (h-5)

However, they too demurred and wanted to hear Boston's opinion.Later in March Goddard detailed his postal plans before Boston's town fathers. In such sessions Goddard reminded his listners of the "oppressive nature" that characterized the British Parliamentary system.

> "By this means (a parliamentary post office) a set of officers, Ministerial, indeed, in their creation, direction and dependence, are maintained in the Colonies, into whose hands all the social, commercial and political intelligence of the Continent is necessarily committed; which at this time every one must consider as dangerous in the extreme .. not only are our letters ... that are liable to be stopped and opened, and their contents construed into treasonable conspiracies, but our newspapers, those necessary and important alarms in time of publick danger, may be rendered of little consequence for want of circulation ... the maintenance of this dengerous and unconstitutional precedent of taxation without our consent as the parting with very considerable sums of our money to support officers of whom it seems to be expected that they should be inimical to our rights." (h-6)

Goddard then went on to propose the following elements of his plan:

1) Secure subscriptions for the necessary funds for the establishment and operation of a post office and the defense of post officers and riders.
2) The Subscribers in each colony were to appoint seven within their number who would in turn appoint a postmaster and fix rates for letters and newspapers.
3) That the postmasters would make contracts with post riders and vouch for their character.
4) All mail was to be under lock and key with no inspection privileges as to the contents with the exception of the postmaster.
5) A postmaster general was to be elected by all the town committees.
6) Accounts within the system could be adjusted by the postmaster general so that he could transfer a surplus from one member post to offset the deficiency of another. In addition, if at the end of the year there

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(h-5) Boston Committee of Correspondence Collection. Manuscript Division, New York Public Library.
(h-6) American Archives, 4th Series, Vol.I. P.502.

was a loss within the entire system that each member would pay a proportional part of the loss.

7) The Postmasters and the postmaster general were to receive a yet to be established commission on all the revenue.

8) All surplus monies were to be put back into the system to enlarge it.

As far as the last feature is concerned it was never intended to create a surplus within the system. It would smack of the old parliamentary plan that they were trying to replace. This same principle was going to be a guide in establishing the postal organization under the Articles of Confederation.

From Boston Goddard went on to Salem and in April of 1774 he was in Portsmouth. Despite a seeming success along the way not everyone felt that he was the man for the job.. Perhaps prophetically, an anonymous person wrote on April 21, 1774:

> "... when I reflect upon the consequences that will naturally ensue in bringing this about (Goddard's post office) from a pretty thorough knowledge of the principles andcharacter of the gentleman who seems most interested himself in the affair, I cannot say I have flattering ideas of his success. A private post is set up from this city of Baltimore, but the merchants here would not suffer Mr. Goddard to have the direction of it ... we would have preferred Mr. Bradford." (h-7)

Goddard's activities on behalf of his post office had not gone unnoticed by John Foxcroft either. Franklin's old fellow postmaster general had seen his own system under attack and the revenue diminishing. On April 5, 1774 he wrote to Anthony Todd, the Secretary of the General Post Office in London, the following letter:

> "Sir:
>
> By the last packet I fully expected to have wrote you a publick letter, but was prevented by the Attorney General desiring a longer time to consider of the State of the Case I had laid before him; since which, he with Mr. Jones of this City (whom he desired might be concerned with him) have given their Opinion which I shall follow as soon as sufficient Proof can be had of Mr. Goddard's offending against the Act of the ninth of Queen Anne, which I expect will not be long first, as he is looked for every day in this City on his return from the Eastward.
>
> The Attorney General and Mr. Jones are of the opinion that if a Prosecution is commenced against a person acting contrary to the Ninth of Queen Anne it is doubtful whether he can be held to bail it being a popular action upon a penal Statute, and by the 21st of James the first no Person shall be held to bail upon a prosecution

on any penal Statute unless it be for such particular Penalties as are therein excepted; one Exception is on a prosecution for defrauding the King of any part of his Revenue upon any Import however they are both of opinion that it will be best to commence a prosecution against Goddard as soon as sufficient proof can be had against him, to have the matter determined, whether he can be held in bail or not ? if he can not, ourJurisdiction is so circumscribed .. that a prosecution will have no effect and the Law can be entirely evaded .. In England the practice is to hold persons in bail in all Cases, but the prosecution there is in the Court of Exchequer, our practice here is quite different, therefore if he can't be held in bail application ought to be made to Parliament for all persons offending against the Act of the 9th of Queen Anne ... to be held to bail otherwise any person moving out of the Colony he is prosecuted in, to another, the Action ceases of course.

Goddard was former PostMaster of Providence and at present owes the office near One Hundred Pounds lawful Money, he left the place in debt and since has been many times in prison with the Press and Journeyman and you may rely on it, notwithstanding the publication in Boston, that he is only supported by a Set of licentious people of desperate Fortunes whose sole Consequence, nay even Dependence, is on their fishing in troubled waters. Men of property both in and out of Trade hold him and his Scheme in the greatest Contempt and abhorrence, as tending to disturb the public peace and Tranquility of America.

I had a letter by yesterday's post from Mr. Finlay at Wilmington, he says the Regulation of the post office through North Carolina is on so bad a footing that it will be some time before he can leave that Province.

I hope by the next packet to send you something decisive about Goddard, in the mean time, believe me to remain, Sir

John Foxcroft" (h-7)

On June 16, 1774 a London paper stated that it had been reported that on May 2nd appeared:

"a plan for the establishment of the New American Post Office, in opposition to that established by the Government. It is however, supposed that as soon as General Gage arrives he will stop the career of the new Post Riders and their employers; for, by the ninth of Queen Anne, Chapter 10th, section 17th, it is decreed, 'that no person or persons to take up, order, despatch, convey, carry, re-carry, or deliver any letter or letters, or set up or employ any foot post, horse post, or packet

(h-7) Public Record Office,London.

> boat, on pain of forfeiting five pounds British money for every week during the continuance of the offence. Ship-masters are also made liable to a penalty of five pounds British money, if they do not deliver their letters at the General Post Office." (h-8)

A public warning had been given. The British were still hopeful that the differences with the colonies could be reconciled. The king was not ready yet to make and issue of closing down the Goddard post. The government was not even sure that this could be done though there could be no doubt that Goddard was in violation of the law. However, in view of the penalty's severity an accusation against him had to bear greater weight than a charge of seeking monetary gain would.

During those days the Maryland Journal, edited by Goddard's sister, trumpeted the validity of his reasons for wanting to abolish the royal post and substitute it with his own. (h-9) Other papers copied the articles. The Friends of Freedom were urged actively to support Goddard's plan, which wouldbe submitted to the Grand Congress, soon to convene in Philadelphia. It was called "... a Body that cannot with any Degree of Consistency or Safety intrust or encourage the Tools of those who have forged our Chains and are striving to rule us with a Rod of Iron."

On October 5, 1774 Goddard introduced his plan to Congress. In abstract he used the following words:

> "To the honorable Commissioners, or Delegates, from the several American States ... now sitting in General Congress ... in Philadelphia.
> ... paying any obedience to the postoffice act ... would be far more detrimental and dangerous than the having no Post-Office at all ... Officers ... are maintained in the Colonies into whose hands all the social, commercial and political intelligence of the Continent is necessarily committed, to our great Danger. Letters are liable to be stopped & opened by ministerial mandates & their Contents construed into treasonable Conspiracies; and News Papers, those necessary and important vehicles, especially in Times of public Danger, may be rendered of little avail for want of Circulation ... as the Subscriber ... hath had great and singular opportunities of becoming acquainted with the Policy and management of the Post-Office, he will most cheerfully ... appearbefore the Congress, answer such questions and enter into such Explanations as shall be proposed to him ... he hath with good advice, published a Plan for establishing a new American Post Office." (h-10)

An entry in the Journal of the Continental Congress dated Wed-

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(h-8) American Archives, 4th Series, Vol.I, p. 503.
(h-9) Maryland Journal, July 16, 1774.
(h-10) Original in author's collection. According to Lawrence Wroth: A History of Printing in Colonial Maryland, p. 133 this text was not known to exist as late as 1922.

nesday, October 5, 1774 advises:

> "An address from William Goddard to the Congress was read and ordered to lie on the table."

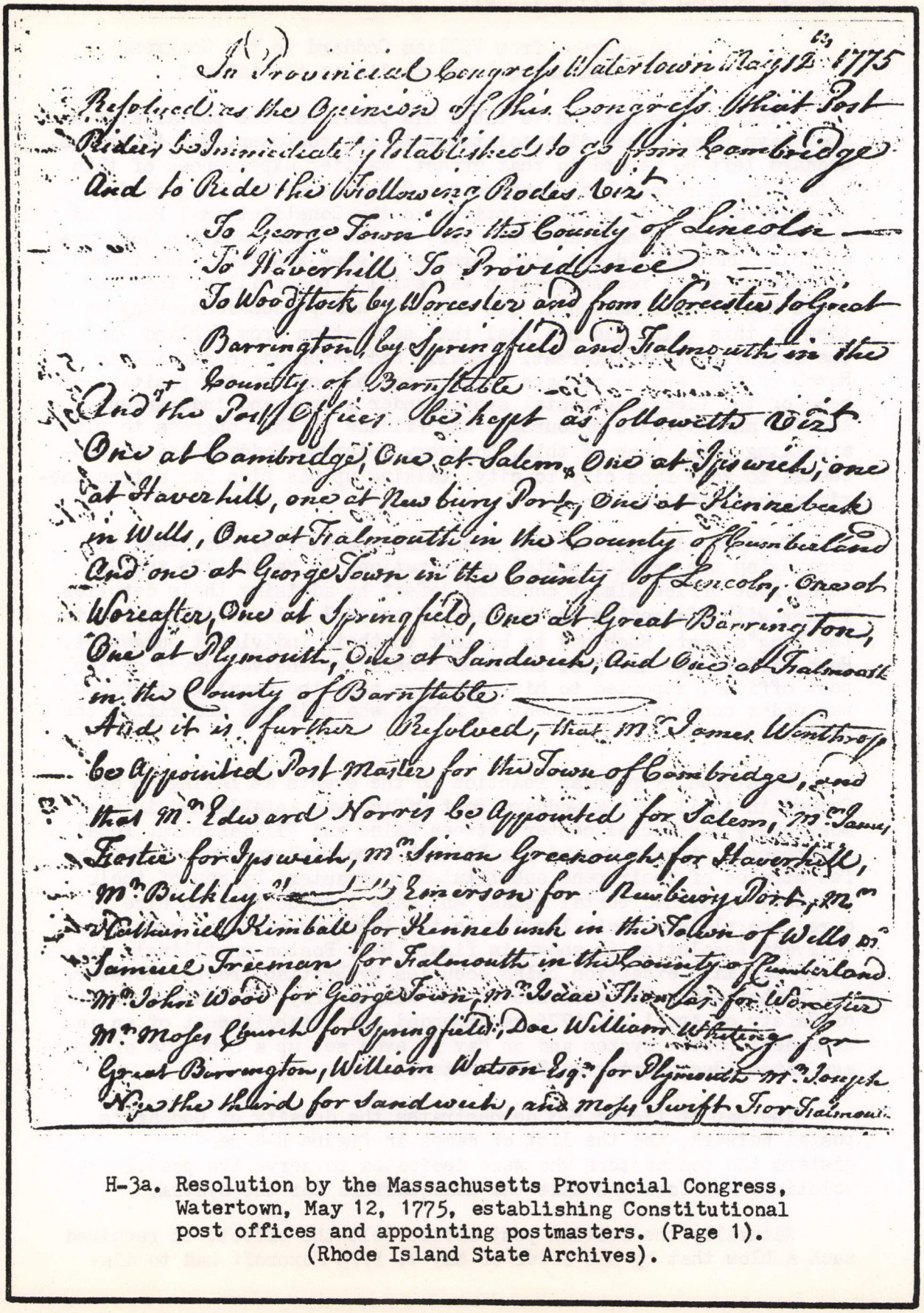
This recommendation to table his plans for the postal system must have been a keen disappointment to its composer. But if it was, Goddard left no record to that effect. Earlier experiences of this nature had hardened him. Perhaps the Congress could not justify a positive action since subscriptions to the Constitutional Post had not come in as quickly as hoped for. On the other hand the Congress at this juncture did not wish perhaps to show its true intentions of independence; reconciliation was still a possibility. The Congress was not all united in its thinking and persuasions. Many of them at this point did not feel that separation from England was to the colonies' best interest. Franklin had returned to America in March of 1775 and he perhaps already had his eye on the position of head of the fledgling postal system under a free and independent America and may have encouraged his friends in the Congress to play a waiting game. None of this, however, deterred Goddard and he proceeded to move from city to city, talking up his plan for a true American Post Office.

Goddard, in spite of the Congress' inactivity, succeeded in destroying the British postal organization. In March 1775 the General Post Office almost conceded defeat by advising their deputies to act with discretion in the face of several acts of disloyalty to the king's post. Much had to be left to their individual judgement. Hugh Fimlay, who had just returned from an extensive survey of the post offices, reported to his superiors that the royal Post Office was under constant harassment by rebels who pilfered and rifled the mails.

Bolstered by popular reaction to the events at Lexington and Cocord in April 1775 a Goddard Post Office was established in almost every commercial center between Maine and Williamsburg. Local Congresses, without regard for British appointed governors, with a few strokes of their pens substituted postmasters by men of their own choice, opened postal roads, and gave instructions to hire riders, who pledged their loyalty to the American cause. A copy of a relevant Resolution is shown in figure H-2. Boston unwillingly had to be the main exception being occupies by British troops. However, not withstanding the presence of the king's army, Boston's Committee of Safety on April 28, 1775 recommended the establishment of an independent postal system and on May 13 even set up a schedule of postage rates (See Chapter on Potal Rates).

The map of figure H-3 demonstrates the density of Goddard's postal network, and the list of names in figure H-4 registers the postmasters who were dedicated to serve the postal revolution. New York was made the headquarters for the system.

Naturally the British post office felt the effect. It received such a blow that by his order of May 4, 1775 Foxcroft had to dis-



In Provincial Congress Watertown May 12th 1775

Resolved as the Opinion of this Congress that Post Riders be Immediately Established to go from Cambridge And to Ride the Following Rodes viz.t

To George Town in the County of Lincolne
To Haverhill To Providence
To Woodstock by Worcester and from Worcester to Great Barrington by Springfield and Falmouth in the County of Barnstable

And the Post Offices be kept as followeth Viz.t One at Cambridge, One at Salem, One at Ipswich, one at Haverhill, one at Newbury Port, One at Kennebeck in Wells, One at Falmouth in the County of Cumberland And one at George Town in the County of Lincoln, One at Worcester, One at Springfield, One at Great Barrington, One at Plymouth, One at Sandwich, And One at Falmouth in the County of Barnstable

And it is further Resolved, that Mr. James Winthrop be Appointed Post Master for the Town of Cambridge, and that Mr. Edward Norris be Appointed for Salem, Mr. James Foster for Ipswich, Mr. Simon Greenough for Haverhill, Mr. Bulkley [illegible] Emerson for Newbury Port, Mr. Nathaniel Kimball for Kennebunk in the Town of Wells Mr. Samuel Freeman for Falmouth in the County of Cumberland Mr. John Wood for George Town, Mr. Isaac Thomas for Worcester Mr. Moses Church for Springfield, Doc. William Whiting for Great Barrington, William Watson Esq.r for Plymouth Mr. Joseph Nye the third for Sandwich, and Mose Swift for Falmouth

H-3a. Resolution by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, Watertown, May 12, 1775, establishing Constitutional post offices and appointing postmasters. (Page 1). (Rhode Island State Archives).

In the County of Barnstable and that Capt. Jonathan Brown, Jonas Dix Esqr. & David Cheever Esqr. be a Comm. to Give Directions for the Selling Off and Returns of the Posts in there Severall Routs, And to Appoint the Number of Riders And Agree with them, and to Agree Likewise with the Post Masters for their Service —

And that the Rates and Duties for Postage of Letters be as Follows Virt

For Any Distance not Exceeding

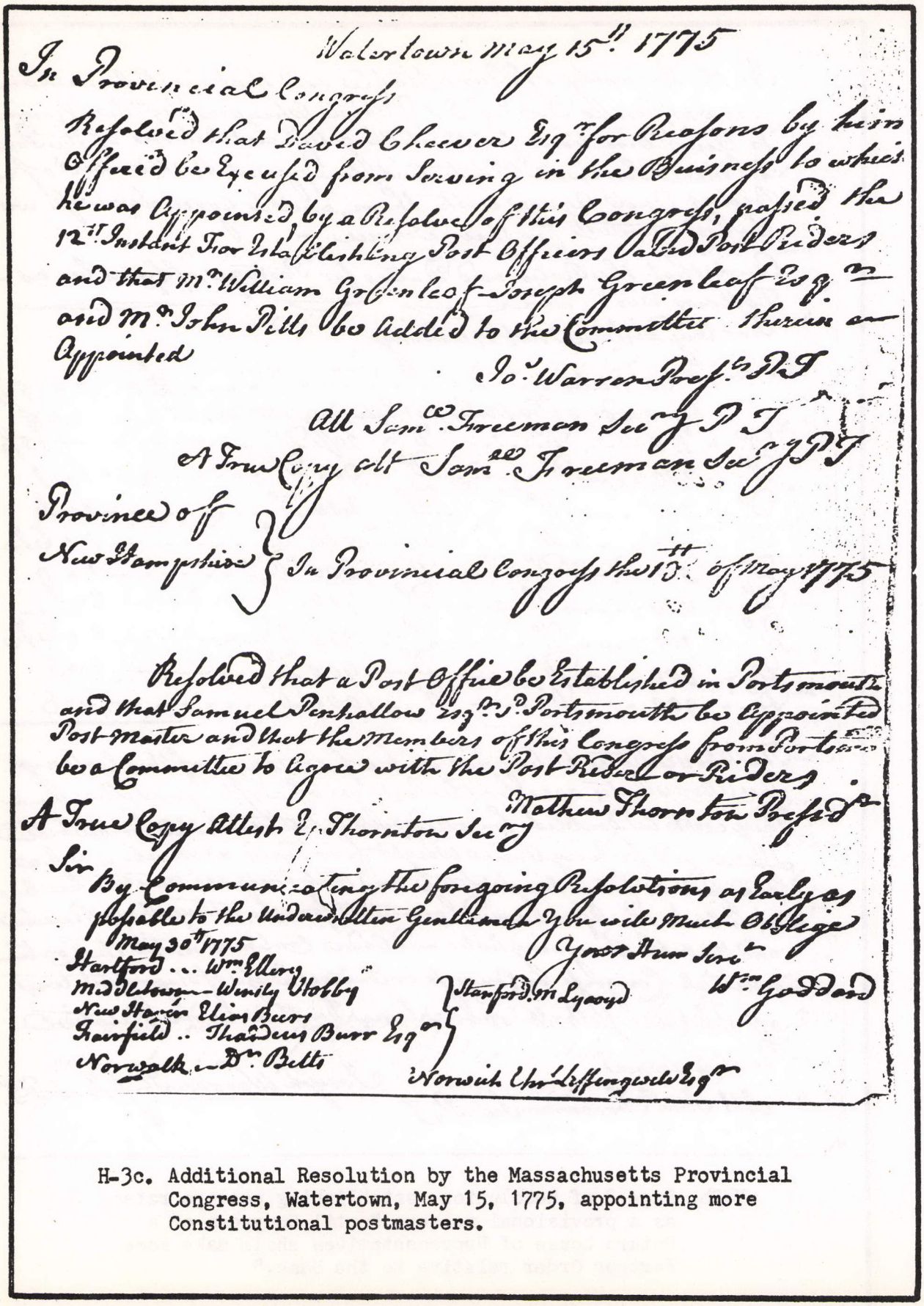
60 Miles					£0 . 0 . 5¼
Upwards of 60 Miles Not Exceeding 100 Miles					8
Do.	100	Do.	Do.	200 Do.	10½
Do.	200	Do.	Do.	300 Do.	1 . 1
Do.	300	Do.	Do.	400 Do.	1 . 4
Do.	400	Do.	Do.	500 Do.	1 . 6½
Do.	500	Do.	Do.	600 Do.	1 . 9
Do.	600	Do.	Do.	700 Do.	2
Do.	700	Do.	Do.	800 Do.	2 . 2½
Do.	800	Do.	Do.	900 Do.	2 . 5
Do.	900	Do.	Do.	1000 Do.	2 . 8

The Above Rates to be paid in Lawful Money of this Colony The Above Rates are for the Postage of a Single Letter — They are to be Doubled for all Double Letters Trebled for all Trebled Letters and for Every Ounce Weight four Times as much is to be Charged as for a Single Letter and that the post Masters be Accountable to the Aforehamed Committee for what they Shall Receive and that the Foregoing Rules and Orders Continue until the Continential Congress or Congress or Future house of Representatives of this Colony Shall make Some Further Order Relative to the Same

Joseph Warren President P.T.

Att Samel Freeman Secr. P.T.

H-3b. Page 2 of Resolution, establishing postage rates as a provisional measure "until Congress or a Future house of Representatives shall make some Further Order relative to the Same."



Watertown May 15th 1775

In Provincial Congress

Resolved that David Cheever Esqr for Reasons by him Offered be Excused from Serving in the Buisness to which he was Appointed by a Resolve of this Congress, passed the 12th Instant For Establishing Post Officers and Post Riders and that Mr William Greenleaf Joseph Greenleaf Esqr and Mr John Pills be Added to the Committee therein Appointed

Jos Warren Presd PT

Att Samel Freeman Secry PT

A True Copy att Samel Freeman Secry PT

Province of New Hampshire } In Provincial Congress the 13th of May 1775

Resolved that a Post Office be Established in Portsmouth and that Samuel Penhallow Esqr of Portsmouth be Appointed Post Master and that the Members of this Congress from Portsmouth be a Committee to Agree with the Post Rider or Riders

Mathew Thornton Presidr

A True Copy Attest Ep Thornton Secry

Sir By Communicating the foregoing Resolutions as Early as possible to the Underwritten Gentlemen You will Much Oblige

May 30th 1775

Your Hum Servt

Wm Goddard

Hartford ... Wm Ellery
Middletown — Wensly Stobby
New Haven Elias Beers
Fairfield .. Thaddeus Burr Esqr
Norwalk — Dr Betts

Stanford M Lyaoyd

Norwich Chr Leffingwell Esqr

H-3c. Additional Resolution by the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, Watertown, May 15, 1775, appointing more Constitutional postmasters.

Falmouth
Kennebunk
Portsmouth
Newburyport
Haverhill
G = Georgetown
Ipswich
Salem
Cambridge
Plymouth
Worcester
Sandwich
Springfield
Providence
Falmouth
Bl. Barrington
Newport
Hartford.
New London
Middletown
New Haven
Fairfield
Norwalk
Stamford
Rhode Island
Newark
New York
Elizabeth
Brunswick.
Woodbridge
Providence
Princeton
Trenton
Warren
Bristol.
Bristol
Philadelphia
Wilmington
Tower Hill
Newport
Westerly
Baltimore
Georgetn
Annapolis
Alexandria
Dumfries
CONSTITUTIONAL POST OFFICES 1775
Fredericksburg
Williamsburg
Norfolk

H-4

List of Constitutional Post Offices and Postmasters (h-11)

Cambridge	Mass.	James Winthrop
Worcester	-	Isaiah Thomas
Springfield	-	Moses Church
Salem	-	Edward Norris
Ipswich	-	James Foster
Haverhill	-	Simon Greenough
Newbury Port	-	Bulkley Emerson
Kennebunk	-	Nathaniel Kimball
Falmouth (Cumberland Cy.)	-	Samuel Freeman
Falmouth (Barnstable Cy.)	-	Moses Swift
Georgetown	-	John Wood
Gr. Barrington	-	William Whiting
Plymouth	-	William Watson
Sandwich	-	Joseph Nye III
Newport	R.Isl.	Nathaniel Otis
Providence	-	John Carter
Bristol	-	Jonathan Russell
Tower Hill	-	Ray Sands
Warren	-	Shubael Burr
Westerley	-	Joshua Babcock
Portsmouth	N.Hampsh.	Samuel Penhallow
Norwich	Conn.	Charles Effengewele
New London	-	Nathaniel Shaw
Hartford	-	William Ellery
Middletown	-	Hobby Wensley
New Haven	-	Elias Bears
Fairfield	-	Thaddeus Burr
Stamford	-	Ebenezer Weed
Norwalk	-	John Betts
New York	N.Y.	John Holt
Newark	N.J.	William Camp

(continued next page)

(h-11) American Archives, 4th Series, Vol. II, p. 538.
Massachusetts Provincial Congress Resolutions, May 12 and 15, 1775.
Mary Goodwin: The Colonial Postal System in Virginia (1956).
John C. Fitzpatrick: The Post Office of the Revolutionary War. Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine. October, 1922, p. 580
Records of the Colony of Rhode Island, May 1775.

Eliz'town	N.J.	deHart
Woodbridge	-	Nathaniel Heard
Brunswick	-	John Dennis
Princeton	-	Baldwin
Trenton	-	Abraham Hunt
Bristol	Penn.	Charles Besconer
Philadelphia	-	William Bradford
Wilmington	Del.	Hempfield (Hemphill)
Baltimore	Md.	William Goddard
Annapolis	-	Samuel H. Howard
Georgetown-on-the-Patomack	-	Thomas Richardson
Alexandria	Va.	James Hendricks
Dumfries	-	Richard Graham
Fredericksburg	-	George Weedon
Norfolk	-	William Davis
Williamsburg	-	John Ross

miss all his riders for lack of funds. Previously several of these men, seeing the success of the new post, had left him to seek employment with the new organization.

While Goddard was out doing much of the leg work connected with the beginning of the business the canny Franklin did not interfere with Goddard's work. He saw fit to dally behind the scenes politicking, trying to achive his end of being selected postmaster of the colonies. On May 29, 1775 the Continental Congress appointed a post office committee whose task it was to set up a postal system. Differences between America and England were now irreconcilable and independence was the only route to take. Serving on the Committee were Thomas Lynch, R.R.Lee, Thomas Willing, Samuel Adams, Philip Livingston and Benjamin Franklin. It was obvious that the would select Franklin to serve as postmaster general. The term was to run for one year or until another person should be appointed.

Goddard was offered the post of either postmaster of Baltimore or Norfolk, or that of surveyor of the post roads. He selected the latter. With this action by the Congress Goddard was eased out as head of the colonial postal system. Besides laying out the post roads, as surveyor had the task of establishing the post houses and to concern himself with internal security relative to the riders. Goddard, having employed many renegade post riders himself in the past, was a good choice for this position. But he relinquished it soon. Had he been rewarded for his efforts by being given the secondary position of secretary or controller he might have been moved up to postmaster general in time. Instead, Richard Bache, Franklin's son-in-law was

given the assistancy position. When Franklin left for France to represent the colonies the controller, Bache, moved up to fill the place left vacant by Franklin.

Things went from bad to worse for the British post and on December 25, 1775, the secretary of the Parliamentary post office in New York gave public notice that because of difficulties in moving mail and lack of revenue the inland mail service would cease. This left only the royal packets. The British post office in what was to become the United States of America closed out forever on this date.

Goddard's position as surveyor required that he travel the colonies. It is known that Benjamin Franklin on September 4, 1776 as Postmaster General and President of the Pennsylvania Convention issued Goddard a pass permitting the bearer W.G.Goddard, Surveyor of the General Post Office established by Congress to pass between Philadelphia and Boston (h-12). In January of 1777 Goddard and Bache quarreled and Goddard was dismissed as surveyor for "whilst in Office, did Business in a very careless, slovenly manner." As in most arguments there were two sides to the dismissal. Bache accused Goddard of incompetence and of not being in sympathy with the American cause. This was probably an overstatement and can be more fairly put in its perspective by dismissing it with the feeling Goddard had for Franklin. Goddard felt that he, rather than Franklin, should have been selected for the position of Postmaster General.

Shortly thereafter Goddard applied for a commission from General Washington and when this was refused he returned to Baltimore where he soon became embroiled in another of a long series of encounters that were to drain his energies from the more important revolution that was going on. It does not appear that he took any active interest in assisting in the war effort. In fact his effort was derisive when in 1778 he contacted Holt. Goddard wrote Holt that he was going to level a personal and vilifying attack on Franklin. Holt, aghast that Goddard would undertake such a course, particularly at a time when Franklin enjoyed such high esteem and respect in America and in France wrote Goddard to forget the idea. Holt wrote a long letter to Goddard and reviewed Franklin's inaction at the time of the Stamp Act and repeated that "he was either unfriendly to the American Cause and took an active part against it, at that Period, or at least was totally inactive in its Favour". Holt's opinion while not gracious of Franklin was not as vituperative as Goddard's might have been. Holt went on to write:"... as to his Private Character, I always greatly respected the Doctor ... and as natural Philosopher, I have the highest Opinion of him, but I have long thought his publick Conduct mysterious and suspicious, and have been obliged to consider him a dangerous Person." (h-13) Holt's letter achieved its end. Goddard demurred from the attack, perhaps seeing the futility of it all or more than likely believing that an attack on Franklin, who at that time was in the midst of delicate negotiations with the French, would not serve the American cause. He had expended much effort and time in the cause of

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(h-12) Photo of this pass in the American Philatelic Congress Book, 1965, p. 145.

(h-13) Copy of the letter in the American Antiquarian Society's Library.

liberty, he could not ignore the implications of an attack on Franklin at this period. Besides his newspaper was taking more and more of his time. As traffic with England during this period was non-existent the basic ingredient for paper, linen, was in short supply. Goddard, ever the promotor with ambition had by 1777 gone into the manufacture of paper, perhaps again to assure the widest circulation of his newspaper, the same reason for his plans for the constitutional post. As his newspaper prospered he became more conservative and less critical of the persons and events of the day. He had at age 45, on May 25, 1786 even taken on a bride of twenty-seven, Abigail Angell.

In August of 1793, after thirty-one years as a printer, reporter, papermaker, post rider, postmaster, surveyor, Goddard retired. He lived for another twenty-five years. During these years his mood mellowed now that he was no longer embroiled in events of the day or commercial matters. The intervening years until his death on December 23, 1817 were concerned with the matters that anyone of advanced age would be concerned with - family, children, children's friends, his own friends and reminiscences of past achievements and disappointments.

For us, appropriately 150 years after his death and more importantly for our purpose two hundred years almost to the day, we cannot help but recount his efforts and achievements. While the postal system had been established along lines loyal to the King of England when he began his efforts, Goddard at personal risk had devised, invested in and established a postal system that could be quickly integrated in the series of events that culminated on July 4, 1776. Working through the Committees of Safety and Committees of Correspondence with a functioning communication system he had been able to help bind thirteen colonies into a federal system who were able to successfully prosecute a war of independence. Through his efforts, to a great extent and to others to a lesser extent one region of this new nation was made aware of the events and happenings in other areas. A common bond was forged, based on an informed and knowledgeable populous.

To William Giles Goddard, all of us owe a debt no less than that to the first echelon of patriots of the day.

A sample of mail which was processed by postmasters who had joined Goddard's provisional postal organization a cover is shown on the next page which originated in Baltimore and was addressed to a merchant in Newport, R.I. (H-6). Three handstamped and dated townmarkings on the cover's reverse enable the student to follow it on its way northward. On June 20, 1775 the letter left Baltimore, passed Philadelphia on the 22nd, and New York the next day, or an average of 52 miles per day. According to "Writings of Benjamin Franklin" (h-14) it took three weeks to cover the distance from Boston to Philadelphia, or 370 miles, in 1763. That was an average of approximately 18 miles per day. It proves that great improvements had been made

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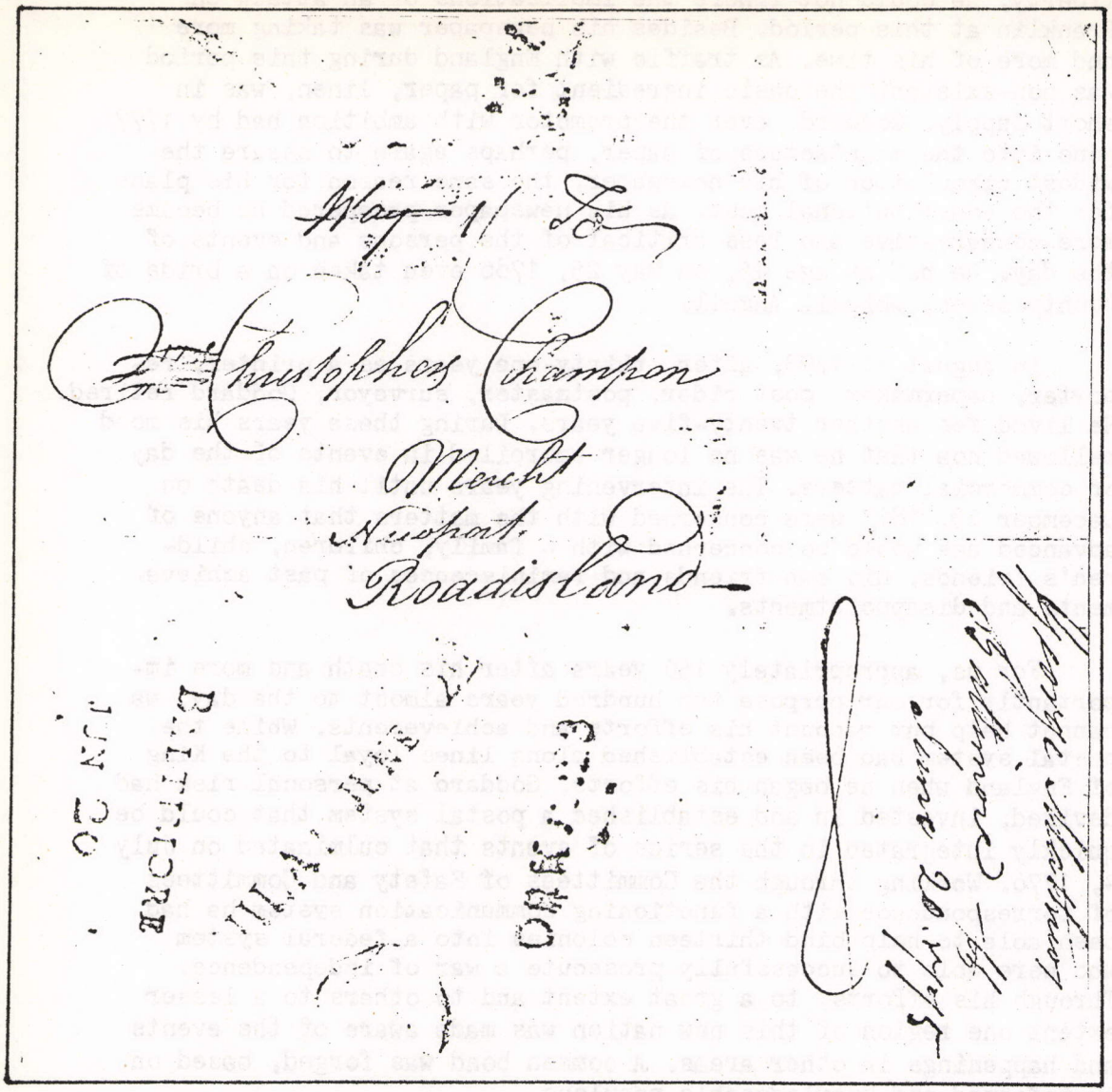
(h-14) A.H.Smyth, ed. Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Volume IV, pp. 215, 215.



H-6. BALTIMORE, black, 33 x 3, JUN(E) 20, 1775, via PHILA:(DELPHIA), brown-red, 24 x 4½, JUNE 22, and N(EW) YORK, red-orange, 27 x 4½, JUN(E) 23, all on reverse, to Newport, R.I. Rate 1 shilling. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

in transporting the mail during the relatively short time of 12 years.

All three town markings on the reverse of this cover are characteristic for the short period of Goddard's Constitutional Post. They were discontinued when the Second Continental Congress decided to take over the postal services from those operated by the British.

A postal rate of one shilling sets the letter apart from those in the past, which were rated in Troy weights of silver, a method which was continued after Goddard's postal organization died a sudden death.

I. Currency used for Postage Payment

Eric P. Newman

Making payment for postage during all periods of Colonial America was complex and cumbersome - even more difficult than paying for other items of small value. This was due primarily to :

(1) the failure of England to furnish an adequate supply of coin for use in the American colonies, particularly small change;
(2) the payment of postage in the equivalent of British sterling which was a "foreign" exchange to the American Colonies;
(3) the non-uniform monetary standards between the individual Colonies themselves;
(4) the fluctuations from time to time in the value of paper money of the individual Colonies relative to both gold and silver coin and to sterling exchange;
(5) the circulation in the American Colonies of English copper coin, genuine and counterfeit, far above its intrinsic value and its sterling value.

Because of these problems the postage rates set by England prior to 1775 were payable in English sterling exchange which was the equivalent of 96 grains of silver to the English shilling. This basis of payment, like other English economic regulations, was a steady drain on the small amount of English gold or silver circulating in the Colonies.

The pounds, shillings, and pence constituting the English monetary system and the English gold and silver coinage of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not generally applicable to transactions in the American Colonies. The English government and English merchants expected the American Colonies to be a source of income for England and to be an outlet for English manufactured products. Since no gold or silver were mined in British North America and virtually no payments in gold or silver were made by the mother country for American products the only source of precious metals or specie coin in the Colonies was from Central America, South America and the West Indies. The right of American Colonies to participate in such trade was restricted and the coin which was obtained in selling products or raw materials to those Spanish, French and Portugese areas was steadily used to pay English mer-

chants for goods as the American standard of living increased.

Early monetary transactions within the British Colonies were primarily by delayed barter, using extensive bookkeeping. The American merchant would sell supplies to farmers and craftsmen on account and payments would be made by the purchaser in farm products, commodities or manufactured items at market prices when such items were produced. A money payment for each small transaction was not always essential. Although these transactions were entered on the books in pounds, shillings and pence a debtor could not generally pay for them in specie. The system operated as a commodity exchange with specie coin needed by the merchant for payment to England for imported goods. Specie coin, therefore, tended to acquire a premium value over bookkeeping payments.

In 1642 Massachusetts Bay Colony raised the value of a Spanish American silver "piece of eight" reales (the Spanish milled dollar) from 4 shillings 6 pence to 5 shillings, or an increase of 11.1%. Since the English sterling standard remained constant this legalized a differential between Massachusetts shillings and English shillings. Massachusetts Bay Colony then had no money of its own to be used in a transaction, therefore the revaluation related to local prices, wages, accounts receivable and accounts payable taken together constituted money in account. When in 1652 Massachusetts Bay became the first English colony in America to mint coins from Spanish American silver those shillings and their fractions contained 22½% less silver than English coins of the same denomination. This increased differential in intrensic specie value was intended to keep the Massachusetts Bay coins from being exported. The Colony was successful in preventing this. However, it had the immediate effect of giving the English shilling a 29% premium over the Massachusetts Bay shilling.

New York and Maryland established a 6 shilling exchange rate for the Spanish dollar, thereby creating a 33-1/3 premium for English coinage over the money of account of those Colonies. By 1704 the economic pressure to increase the various colonial equivalents for foreign specie coin was substantial and resulted in a Proclamation of Queen Anne setting the maximum premium rates at which silver coin of various countries could pass in America. This did not regulate gold or copper coin. It did not cover bullion. The proclamation was codified in 1707 but did not stabilize the exchange. It officially established for all American Colonies a money of account different from the mother country and known as Proclamation Money.

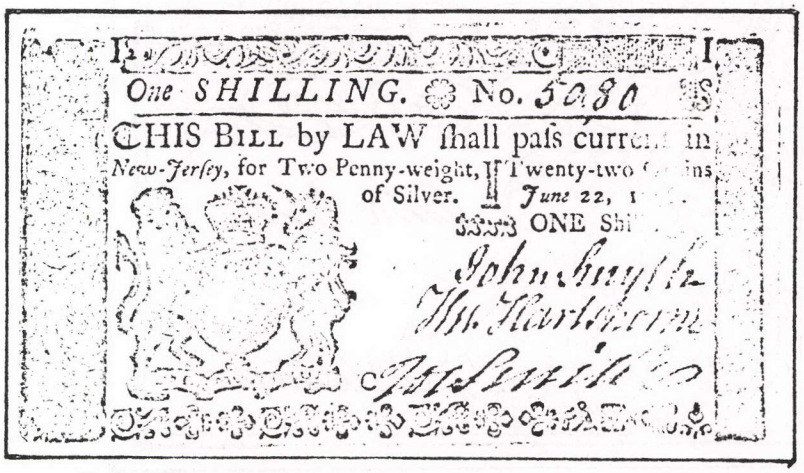
Paper money created the bulk of the circulating medium of Colonial America beginning in 1690 in Massachsetts Bay, in 1703 in South Carolina, in 1709 in New York, Connecticut, New Hampshire and New Jersey, and in all other Colonies in 1755. These issues were redeemable on specific dates only by the issuing Colony and were subject to the ability of the Colony to meet those obligations from taxes, from interest collected of Colony loans to private persons,

or from refinancing. Each Colony's paper money fluctuated in relation to the value of specie coin due to the economic health of the Colony. By 1740 most of the Colonies had drastic inflation and there were eight different exchange values in America. In due course these currencies were revalued. A table of the value of a Spanish dollar in shillings and pence at critical periods is set forth in the following table.

Value of a Spanish Dollar in Colonial and State Shillings and Pence during Critical Years

Year	1740	1748	1761	1774	1778	1783
New Hampshire	23/1	49/6	6	6	19/6	6
Massachusetts	23/1	49/6	6	6	19/6	6
Rhode Island	23/1	49/6	6	6	19/6	6
Connecticut	23/1	49/6	6	6	11/8	6
New York	7/3	8/6	8	8	11/8	8
Pennsylvania	7/10	8/1	7/6	7/6	30	7/6
New Jersey	7/10	8/1	7/6	7/6	30	7/6
Delaware	7/10	8/1	7/6	7/6	30	7/6
Maryland	11/6	9	6/6	7/6	30	7/6
Virginia	5/5	5/7½	5/7½	6	24	6
North Carolina	63	45	6/6	8	28	8
South Carolina	36	32/6	32/6	32/6	71/10	4/8
Georgia	4/6	4/6	4/6	4/8	=	4/8

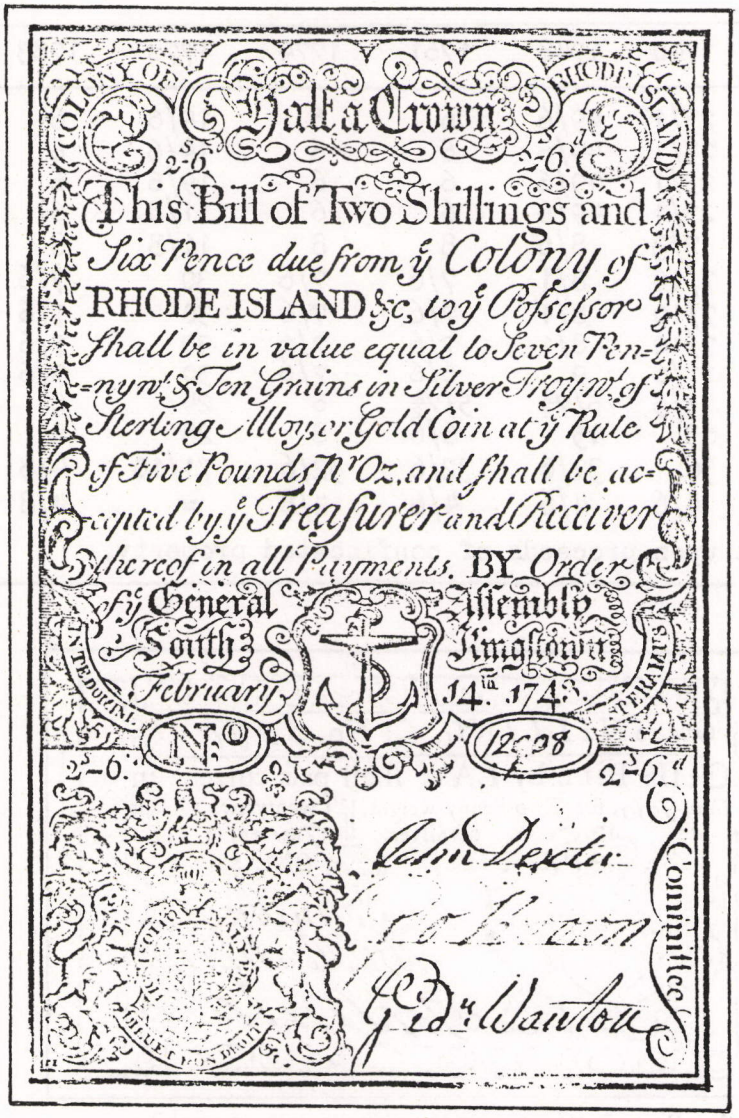
= Contingent upon proceeds of confiscated property.



I-1. New Jersey paper money was payable in silver from 1724 to 1776.

Some colonial paper money was issued as equivalent to specific weights of silver and the denominations in money were secondary. New

Jersey from 1724 to 1776 issued paper money in that manner, 2 pennyweights and 22 grains of silver being the theoretical currency value of bills for one shilling (I-1) with other bills having proportionate multiples. One shilling sterling would have been equal to 4 pennyweights. This differential was in compliance with the Proclamation Money provisions of the 1707 Act of Parliament. It sometimes had little relationship to the reality of the exchange. In New York the paper money issues through 1723 had a silver equivalent of 2 pennyweights and 12 grains plate (silver) per shilling. In Massachusetts Bay a similar basis for silver conversion was used on its 1737-1741 issues.



I-2. Some Rhode Island issues were Payable in silver or in gold.

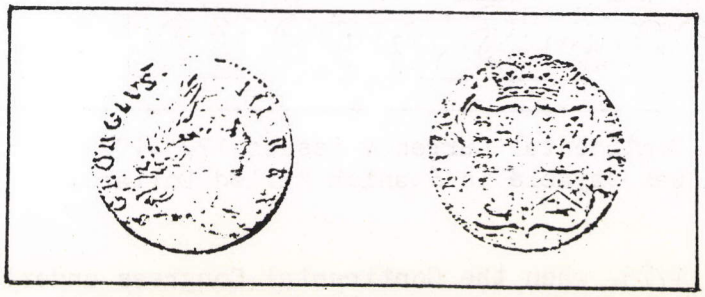
During the period prior to the American Revolution many of the Colonies issued paper money in denominations which were low enough to be used for postage payments for a single letter. Massa-

chusetts Bay authorized a one shilling note by 1713 and a one penny note by 1722. Connecticut issued 9 pence bills by 1755, while Rhode Island dropped its lowest denomination from one shilling in 1715 to 6 pence in 1740, to 4 pence in 1744, to 3 pence in 1762. Pennsylvania issued 4 pence bills by 1746, and 3 pence bills by 1749. North Carolina dropped its lowest denomination from one shilling to 4 pence in 1748. Georgia had a 2 pence note by 1755. New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Maryland maintained one shilling as their lowest denomination of paper money. Such bills made it possible for people to pay postage without the use of small silver coin.

It is fully understandable from the foregoing why postage, particularly between Colonies and Europe vice versa was payable in one standard currency, namely English sterling.

Payment for postage in sterling created a problem with respect to copper coins circulating in America. Copper coin was not a legal tender and circulated by sufferance. English copper coinage from its beginning in 1672 had an intrinsic value equal to about one-half of its sterling or circulating value. As a result large quantities of halfpence and farthings were produced. In addition counterfeits of halfpence appeared in quantity because of the profit in their production and the English government did little to control such counterfeiting. Although there was a great shortage of copper coin during the seventeenth century in America, substantial quantities of copper coin, both genuine and counterfeit, were not sent earlier to the Colonies than the first quarter of the eighteenth century. The light counterfeits were a commodity of great profit to the sender. There was no regulation which set the circulation value of copper coin in the Colonies and a halfpenny usually passed for one penny in local currency as a matter of convenience. The genuine pieces were worth at most a halfpenny in English sterling exchange and therefore could not be used for sterling payment because they were of greater value if used in America. In addition the number of halfpence acceptable in a transaction was limited by custom. Toward the middle of the eighteenth century the circulating value of coppers at 12 to the shilling in most Colonies began to change, moving in 1741 to 15 to the Pennsylvania shilling, and in 1750 to 18 to the shilling in the New England Colonies and Maryland.

In 1750 New York merchants proposed changing the rate from 12 to 14 to the shilling in order to prevent export or import of coppers. North Carolina in 1768 reaffirmed circulation at 12 to the North Carolina shilling. Colonial Virginia did not circulate cop-



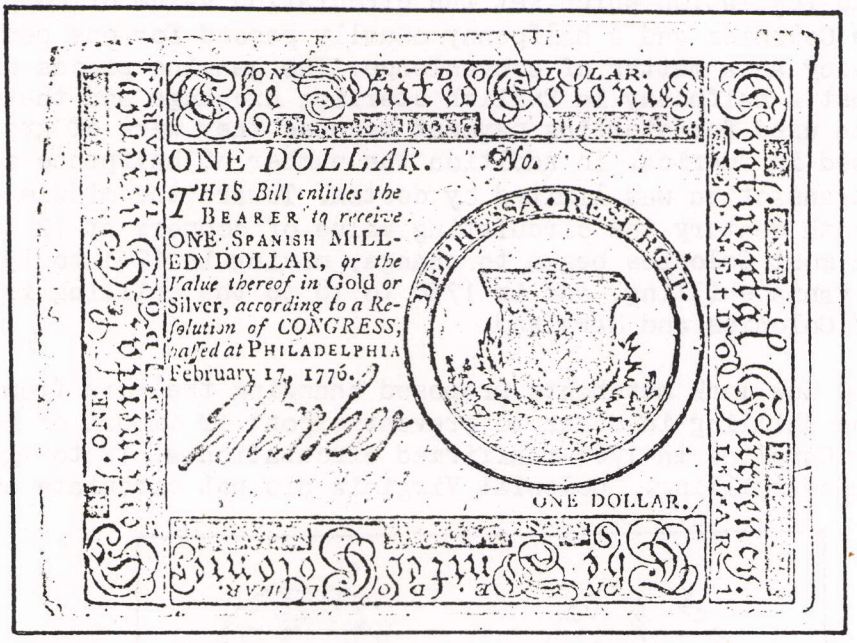
I-3. Virginia half pence (copper)
of 1774.

pers in any quantity and used tobacco for its medium of exchange. When Virginia finally received and circulated a special 1773 coinage of copper halfpence of its own the American Revolution had already begun.

The trustees of the Colony of Georgia retained currency equal to sterling and English halfpence circulated for a halfpenny there. The colonists were extremely sensitive to the profits being made either by the Crown or by counterfeiters on copper coin, but as long as coppers had public acceptance it amounted to a convenient circulation of token maney, In 1722 when a special issue of coins for America was struck in England by private franchise the coins were summarily rejected because they were not pure copper.

To the colonial postmasters who were obliged to account for postage in sterling the coppers in circulation sometimes were unacceptable if they had an excess of coppers on hand. Such a postmaster might benefit by paying out coppers in order to obtain paper money or specie, and on other occasions he might not have enough coppers to accomodate a recipient of a letter with change. He would prefer to make a profit for himself in the exchnage of copper. Banking facilities had not been permitted to develop in the Colonies.

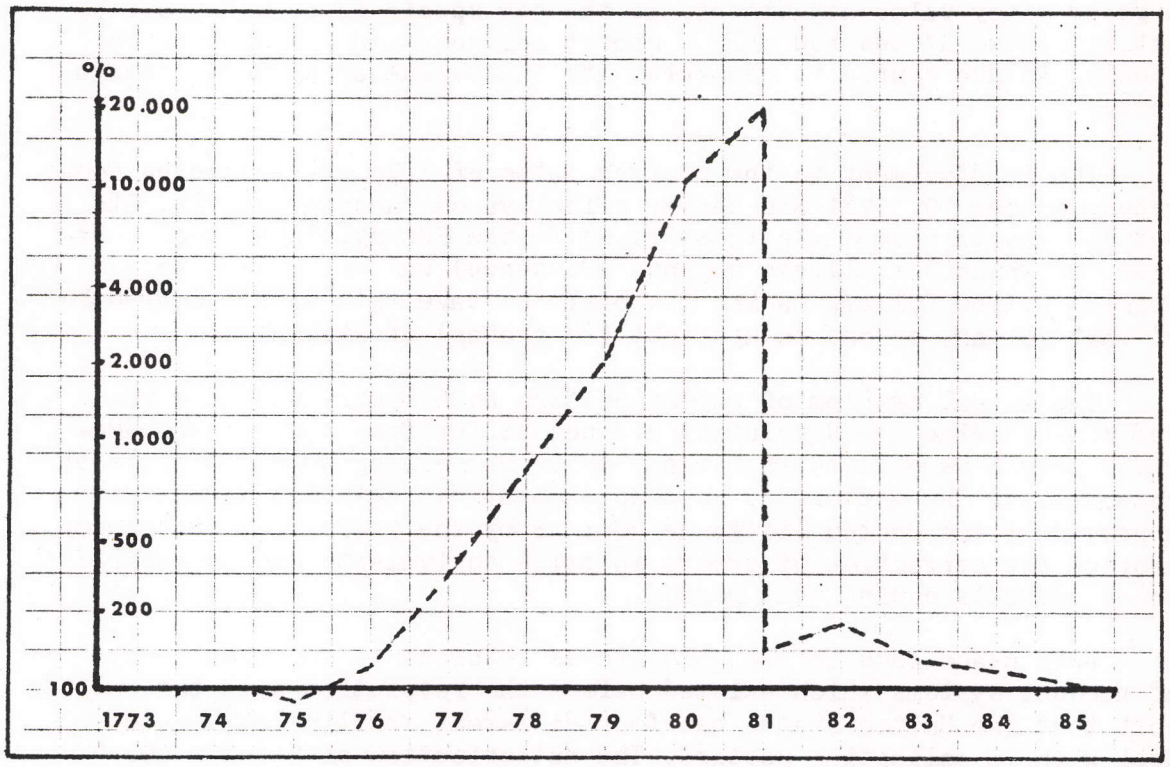
Striking of copper coins in America by Vermont, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, and by the national government during the 1785-1788 period finally created such a glut of copper coins in circulation in the United States that by 1789 they were as unstable in value as the coppers from England had been and continued to be.



I-4. Continental Currency issued 1775-1779 was payable in Spanish Milled Dollars.

On July 26, 1775, when the Continental Congress undertook its

own postal operations for the United Colonies the postage rates continued to be set on a sterling exchange basis. The Continental Congress had completed an authorization of its own paper currency on July 25, 1775 payable in "Spanish milled Dollars or the value thereof in Gold or Silver (I-4). The Spanish milled Dollar continued to be equivalent to 4 shillings 6 pence sterling. For postage calculations it was equal to 432 grains of silver or 18 pennyweights, even though the coin itself was somewhat lighter and had little circulation in America after hostilities began. The Continental Currency therefore became a paper money substitute for the Spanish milled Dollar during the American Revolution. Although issued without any specie backing the Continental Currency held its value at its silver equivalent due to patriotism and forced circulation in most areas until September, 1777 when steady depreciation began.



I-5. Weighted Average of Annual Wholesale Prices of 15 Commodities in Philadelphia, 1773-1785. Base: Average 1773.

Most circulating paper money issued by the individual Colonies prior to and during the Revolution suffered a heavy depreciation early in 1777 particularly those of the middle Atlantic ones which were occupied by the British forces. The 50% increase in postage rates approved October 17, 1777, was a realistic recognition of the depreciation in the value of paper money (i-1). The December 28, 1779 postage rate increase of "twenty prices" over the 1775 rate was ap-

(i-1) See Chapter on Postage Rates.

proved at a time when the depreciation rate was 29 for 1. The further doubling of rates on May 5, 1780 (40 times the 1775 rates) coincided with the then currency depreciation rate of 40 for 1.

By the end of 1780 both the Continental Currency and paper money issued by the States had ceased to circulate because they had become virtually worthless. A new specie basis of prices was established. Pennsylvania issued a new "specie" paper money, soon followed by some of the other States, though the national government remained aloof. Thus when the postal rates of December 12, 1780 were lowered to "half the rates paid at the commencement of the present war" postage became payable in full value equivalent of sterling exchange, whether in coin or in new specie paper money. The short lived revision of postal rates announced on February 24, 1781 to twice the rates of 1775 apparently was primarily for reasons of operating cost rather than being a paper money value adjustment, as the new specie paper money circulating in two States had only a modest depreciation in relation to specie. In due course it recovered its full value as a specie equivalent.

The readjustment to the postage rates of 1775 was passed by Congress October 19, 1781 and became effective on January 1, 1782. Its purpose was to coordinate those rates to the Pennsylvania specie currency of which 7 shillings 6 pence (90 pence) was equivalent to a Spanish milled Dollar, making the basic postage rate equal to 5/90ths of that dollar, or one pennyweight (24 grains) of silver.

The actual problem of paying postage with highly unstable paper money during the Revolution did not differ from the one the American people were faced with when buying or selling other services or commodities. The matter was so complex that depreciation tables were approved by the United States as well as by the individual States to provide for correction of errors in price equivalents and in paper money payments during that period.

When peace came in 1783 the States returned to the same money of account systems which existed before the revolution with the result that the United States had four different shilling values to deal with in collecting postage. The authorization of October 20, 1787 for a postage rate reduction of approximately 25%, effective April 5, 1788, left some flexibility to adjust the rates to conform "to the currencies of the several states."

Not before 1792 when Federal legislation established a mint the dollar money standard began to be untangled from its value complications.

J. An Express from Lexington

Robert L. Berthelson

In the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania is a manuscript letter four pages long. Bearing the name of thirty-nine signers in seventeen towns and cities between Boston and Philadelphia, it describes in brief and urgent detail the tragic events near Boston on April 19, 1775, the battles of Lexington and Concord.

The story of the letter's five day journey as it was carried by postrider the three hundred fifty miles through Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey to Philadelphia and the excitement and reaction to its news is unique in our nation's history. Although the letter originated in Watertown, Massachusetts, at the eastern end of the Boston-Worcester road, its story begins in Boston about six miles to the southeast.

Dr. Joseph Warren of Boston, the zealous champion of American liberty, informed of the British plan to march into the countryside, dispatched William Dawes and Paul Revere by separate routes to warn John Hancock and Samual Adams in Lexington. Revere implemented his plan to put in motion a series of alarm riders by signal lanterns in the North Church and set out for Lexington. Reaching Lexington about 15 miles to the northwest at midnight, he warned Hancock and Adams but was later captured while attempting to reach Concord. When he was released later without his horse he walked back to Lexington in time to witness the subsequent events.

The well-known march of 800 British troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Smith had almost reached Lexington by 4 A.M., April 19th, when it became obvious that the colonial militia was assembling throughout the countryside and an urgent request for reinforcements was sent back to General Gage in Boston. By a prearranged plan Gage ordered a second brigade of 1,000 men under Brigadier Earl Percy to leave Boston in support of the first column.

In Watertown an important member of the Massachusetts Committee of Safety, General Joseph Palmer, was waiting for news of the British regulars. He had been warned about the impending march by one of scores of alarm riders and had left his horse saddled in the barn and gone to bed. The first news of the Lexington battle was brought by a drum-beating messenger early in the morning, and he rushed out to spread the alarm. When the news reached him from Boston that a second brigade was coming out to support the first, he realized that help would be needed by the colonial militia as well. He immediately dispatched the following letter which has become

known to historians as the Lexington Alarm:

"Wednesday morning near 10 of the clock - Watertown

To all the friends of American liberty be it known that this morning before break of day, a brigade, consisting of about 1,000 or 1,200 men landed at Phip's Farm at Cambridge and marched to Lexington, where they found a company of our colony militia in arms, upon whom they fired without any provocation and killed six men and wounded four others. By an express from Boston, we find another brigade are now upon their march from Boston supposed to be about 1,000. The Bearer, Israel Bissell, is charged to alarm the country quite to Connecticut and all persons are desired to furnish him with fresh horses as they may be needed. I have spoken with several persons who have seen the dead and wounded. Pray let the delegates from this colony to Connecticut see this.

J. Palmer, one of the
Committee of Safety.

They know Col. Foster of Brookfield one of the Delegates."

The "bearer" Israel Bissell, a twenty-three old express rider from East Windsor, Connecticut, now entrusted with the only known official dispatch of the battle of Lexington, set out along the Boston Post Road toward Worcester about thirty-six miles away. The traffic was unusually heavy with hundreds of militiamen from towns further west heading for Concord in answer to the earlier alarm. Those who had not yet heard the news were startled by the cries of "The war has begun, the war had begun !"

The home of General Artemas Ward, mewly elected Commander-in-Chief of the Massachusetts militia, still overlooks the Boston Road in Shrewsbury about five miles east of Worcester. Across the road from the large two story gray and white house is an early milestone reading: "Boston 35, Springfield 65." Ward was confined to bed with a painful bladder stone when the message arrived. At sunrise the next day he painfully mounted his horse and headed for Cambridge.

Before noon Bissell arrived in Worcester dusty and tired shouting: "To arms, to arms, the war has begun !" His fast white horse, spent with fatigue, fell dead near the meetinghouse and Palmer's plea for additional horses became prophetic. An old signal cannon was fired from the hill behind the meetinghouse and the bell was rung to alert the outlying towns of important news. Palmer's original letter was copied and the first endorsement added:

"A true copy taken from the original per order of the Committee of Correspondence for Worcester - April 19, 1775.

Attest. Nathan Baldwin, Town Clerk."

The whereabouts of the original copy is not known, but the practice of keeping the copy received and sending a new copy forward was followed several times along the route. Copies were also made by individuals for their personal files or to send as dispatches or marching orders. Several copies can be found in local newspapers and broadsides printed as the news spread southward.

Early the next morning, Thursday, April 20th, Bissell left Worcester travelling south toward Connecticut. Until now he had been following the route known as the Upper Post Road. This road extends westward from Worcester through Springfield, Massachusetts, to Hartford before continuing to New York. The route south was known as a principle road that would take Bissell through Norwich to New London crossing the Middle Post Road at Pomfret.

The farm of Connecticut's famous General Israel Putnam would be Bissell's next stop. Putnam had retired from military service after having served in the French and Indian War. The alarm from Lexington reached him as he was working in a field with his son Daniel who later wrote of the incident:

> "He loitered not but left me, the driver of his team, to unyoke it in the furrow, and not many days to follow him to camp."

Putnam's arrival at the scene in record time, especially for the large fifty-seven year old veteran, is legendary.

In Brooklyn, near Pomfret, the alarm letter was endorsed for the second time:

> "Brooklyn, Thursday 11 O'clock, above is a true copy received by express from Worcester.
>
> Attest. Daniel Tyler, Jun."

Twenty-four hours had now passed since the British Regulars had engaged the colonial militia at Concord's North Bridge. The ensuing battle which drove the troops back fifteen miles to Boston had been over almost eighteen hours, but still no further news had reached Bissell. Two letters describing these events reached Pomfret at 3 P.M., four hours behind Bissell, and did not arrive in Norwich until the next morning. Knowledge of the battle's successful outcome apparently did not catch up with Bissell for two more days. It should be noted that accurate, standardized time keeping did not exist in 1775 and all elapsed times are approximate, based upon written records.

The next endorsement was added to Palmer's letter in Norwich probably at the inn of Colonel Christopher Leffingwell, a prominent citizen and successful businessman.

> "Norwich, Thursday 4 o'clock, above is a true copy as by express from Mr. Tyler.
>
> Attest. Chirstopher Leffingwell."

Connecticut's Governor Jonathan Trumbull was in Norwich when Bissell arrived, perhaps at Leffinwell's inn, as the two men were close friends. Although Trumbull was the only Whig Governor in the colonies at that time, he still maintained cordial relations with General Cage, British Governor of Massachusetts. Understandably shocked and disbelieving at the news from Watertown, Trumbull decided to be prudent and dispatched express riders to obtain additional intelligence before calling a meeting of the General Assembly. Returning immediately to his home in Lebanon, he converted his general store into a supply depot for the local militia who were leaving in "defence of Boston". (Approximately 135 men from Lebanon are listed in the Lexington Alarm records.)

The last two lines of Palmer's letter read: "Pray let the delegates from this colony to Connecticut see this ... They know Col. Foster from Brookfield, one of the delegates." If these words are interpreted as an address, their meaning becomes clearer. Col. Jedidiah Foster's home was about twenty miles west of Worcester. From an inference in the following letter, he apparently received Palmer's dispatch sometime Wednesday, April 19th, and proceeded to Lebanon the next day with papers from the Massachusetts Provincial Congress urging Trumbull to call a meeting and form an army in Connecticut.

> "To the President of the Honorable Provincial Congress of the Massachusetts Bay
>
> Brookfield, April 23, 1775.
>
> Honoured Sir:
>
> Mr. Davidson immediately preceeded from Concord to Governor Trumbull with the papers as directed by the Congress, but from the then appearance of affairs he did not think proper to call the assembly. Early on Thursday morning Mr. Davidson, with myself, set out for Lebanon to Governor Trumbull, who, about two hours before our arrival, had received the tragical narrative from Colonel Palmer, and cheerfully concented to call the assembly of the colony to be held at Hartford on Wednesday next ...
>
> Jedidiah Foster."

It was late afternoon when Bissell arrived in New London, passing a small red schoolhouse where Nathan Hale was schoolmaster. At a hastily called town meeting Captain William Coit's Independent Company was instructed to march for the defence of Boston. Hale is said to have addressed the meeting but did not enter service until July 17, fulfilling his school teaching commitment. Palmer's letter was again copied and endorsed:

> "New London, Thursday evening 7 o'clock, a true copy as by express.
>
> Richard Law
> Samuel H. Parsons
> Nathan Shaw Jun.
> William Coit Committee."

On the opposite of the Thames river from New London in the town of Groton, Dean John Hurlbert kept a two part diary. In the weather section under heading 'April 20th' he wrote briefly:"High south wind but warm, some cloudy looks like rain." Several hours later he made another entry, this time in the "work section": "31st about 4 o'clock in ye morning alarmed with tydings from Boston, upon which I set off to meet ye comtt. at ye ferry with ye Col. advised to ye compy together brot orders to ye captains."

The ferry mentioned by Dean Hrlbert was described by Hugh Finlay in his postal survey of 1773-74 and was frequently used by Benjamin Mumford the regular psotrider between Newport, Rhode Island, and Saybrook, Connecticut. "The ferry is very well attended, it is not difficult," says Finlay. "They grumble at being obliged to carry the Post over when it is dark, or when it rains of blows, they seem much inclined to refuse the service but they fear the consequences."

The postrider would normally leave New London at 6 P.M. travelling five miles west to a rope ferry which croosed the narrow Niantic River. Sleeping overnight at this ferry he would next travel thirteen miles to the Connecticut River ferry and exchange mails with the western rider at 11 the next morning at Saybrook.

Bissell's news could not afford to wait. After a brief rest he began again, this time travelling at night crossing the rope ferry under a cloudy sky. To the residents of Lyme on the East bank of the Connecticut River we can imagine a quiet night with no sound except the wind and the din of spring peepers. Then in the distance came the sound of barking dogs and a fast galloping horse. Finally shouts of inquiry aroused four members of the local committee who read the letter and affixed their signatures;

"Lyme, Friday morning, 1 o'clock, a true copy
as received by express.

John Laynd
John M'Curdy
William Noyes
Samuel Mather Jr. Committee."

Bissell had now reached the mouth of the Connecticut River where the Ferry Tavern, built by the Bacon family, had stood since 1763. Finlay's Jounal refers to the ferry as follows: "Cross'd the ferry, it is well attended, about 3/4 of a mile in width, the boats are good tho' not so large as those at Rhode Island." However, well attended it may have been at 1 o'clock in the morning, Bissell nevertheless reached Saybrook in time to have his document copies and endorsed again at 4 A.M.

"Saybrook, Friday morning 4 o'clock, a true
copy as received by express.

Sam Field
John Cockran
Richard Dickenson Committee."

Hugh Finlay's comments on the next stage of the "Lower Post Road" are quite interesting as he continued his journey toward New York the year before:

> "The Post not come up, proceeded alone towards New Haven, passing thro' well settled Townships. Killingworth is a pleasant village, a mile long. East and West Guilford are large villages, as is Bradford likewise; there must certainly pass many letters to and from these towns, but the riders I believe make them perquisite, as there's no offices in these places to check them. The road is very good. The ferry at New Haven, or rather two miles from it is about 100 yds wide and is pretty well attended; from the ferry to the town the road was good. Many people ask'd me if I had not met the Post driving some oxen; it seems he had agreed to bring some along with him."

Here Finlay is referring to the regular rider, seventy-two year old "Herd" of Stratford.

The endorsements to Palmer's letter tell of a different journey as the news spread westwards.

> "Killingsworth, Friday morning 7 o'clock for worded as received by express,
>
> George Elliott
> Sam Gales Committee."
>
> "E.Guilford, Friday morning 8 o'clock, forwarded as received by express
>
> Timothy Todd
> Isaac Knight Committee."
>
> "Guilford, Friday morning 10 o'clock, received by express
>
> Samuel Brown
> D. Landon"
>
> "Branford, Friday 12 o'clock at noon, received and forwarded by
>
> Samuel Barker
> One of the Committee."

The Lexington Alarm was already beginning to fan out along Bissell's route, and large numbers of able-bodied men from Connecticut began assembling to march "for the relief of Boston". This gathering of militia was both orderly and spontaneous although no official colony action had been authorized. In many cases the militia marched off under their officers without orders or with only local instructions.

On April 21 the Committee of Correspondence sent a letter to John Hancock of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress:

"Every preparation is making to support your Province. The ardour of our people is such that they can't be kept back. The colonels are to forward part of the best men and the most ready, as fast as possible, the remainder to be ready at a moments warning. These are the present movements with us."

Bissell reached New Haven early in the afternoon and a town meeting was called at the "Middle Brick" church. New Haven conservatives voted against sending an armed aid to Boston but when Benedict Arnold heard the news from Lexington, he recognized it as an opportunity to make use of his Second Company of Governor's Foot Guards. Runners were sent to assemble them and fifty men at once agreed to leave for Cambridge the following morning. Saturday morning Arnold paraded the scarlet uniformed Guards before a large crowd, inspected them, and listened to an exhortation by the Reverend Jonathan Edwards. Arnold next sent a request for powder and ball to the selectmen who were meeting in a nearby tavern, but the selectmen bluntly refused to comply with the request. Arnold briskly marched his company to the tavern and dispatched a messenger to inform the city fathers that if the keys to the powder house were not delivered to him at once, he would order his men to break open the door to the magazine and help themselves. Arnold won the keys and the Guards left immediately for Boston.

The New Haven committee endorsed Palmer's letter as follows:

"Mew Haven, Apeil 21, received and forwarded upon certain intelligence by

Samuel Bishop
Joseph Munson
Timothy Jone Jr.
David Austin
Isaac Dolittle
Daniel Lyman Committee."

Between New Haven and New York Hugh Finlay comments briefly on the quality of the roads and the character of the regular postriders he met during November 1773:

"After settling with Mr. Kilby (the deputy in New Haven) and instructing him in his duty relative to checking the riders, I left New Haven and proceeded twenty-one miles to Fairfield. The road is stoney in some places, but a good road on horseback. The High Sherrif for the county waited on me, and represented that an office is much wanted in this town to hinder the impositions of the postriders ... If the Postmaster General shall see it proper to establish an office here Mr. Burr would recommend the care of it to Mr. Elijah Abel, for whose good conduct he will become bound. He says that Andrew (old Herd's son) is a careful man, but Ebenezer (another son) exacts and is care-

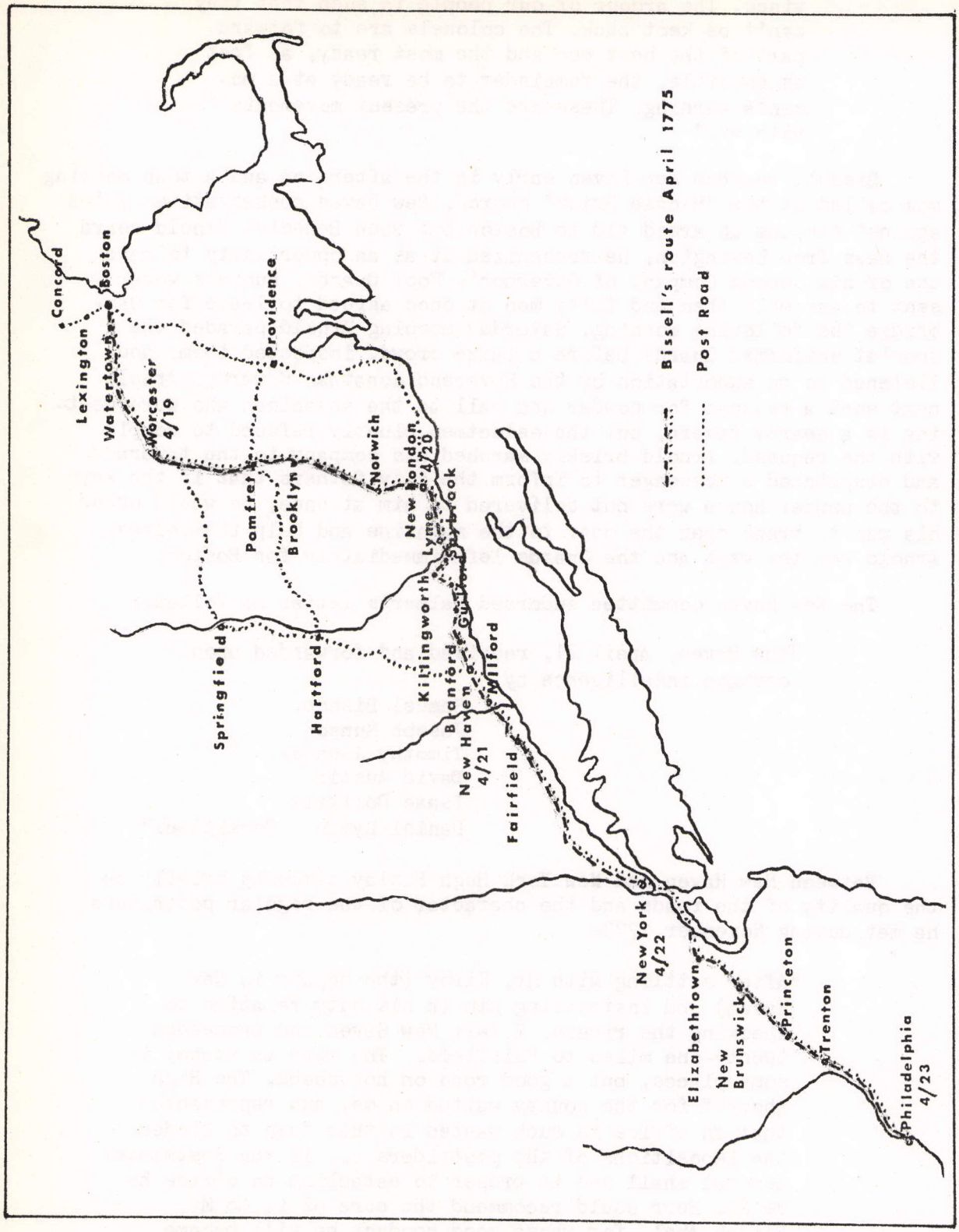

Concord
Lexington
Boston
Watertown
Worcester 4/19
Providence
Pomfret
Brooklyn
Norwich
New London 4/20
Lyme
Saybrook
Killingworth
Guilford
Branford
New Haven 4/21
Milford
Fairfield
Springfield
Hartford
New York 4/22
Elizabethtown
New Brunswick
Princeton
Trenton
Philadelphia 4/23
Bissell's route April 1775
Post Road

Figure J-1

less. Rested here all Sunday, next day, the 15th, proceeded twelve miles in broken stoney road to Norwalk, Mr. Belding, Postmaster. 17th, left Norwalk and proceeded forty-one miles to Kingsbridge in good road, and next morning rode fifteen miles in very fine road, and arrived at New York where the General Post Office is kept under the care of John Antill, acting for Alexander Colden esq. the Deputy Postmaster."

Bissell apparently left New Haven during the afternoon of April 21st. In the town of Milford a few miles futher west, a fourteen old boy named Joseph Plumb Martin was helping his grandfather that day and years later wrote down the recollections of the event:

> "I was ploughing in the field about half half a mile from home, about the twenty-first day of April, when all of a sudden the bells fell to ringing and three guns were repeatedly fired in succession down in the village; what the cause was we could not conjecture. I set off to see what the cause of the commotion was. I found most of the male kind of the people together; soldiers for Boston were in requisition. A dollar deposited on the drumhead was taken up by someone as soon as placed there, and the holders name taken, and he enrolled with orders to equip himself as quick as possible. O', I thought, if I were old enough to put myself forward, I would be the possessor of a dollar, the dangers of war notwithstanding."

Crossing the Stratford River, now known as the Housatonic, at Peter Hepburn's ferry the post road wound its way through Stratford and into Fairfield.

On the morning of April 22, the steps of the stately brick mansion of Thaddeus Burr were filled with members of the Fairfield Committee of Correspondence. Rumors of the Lexington battle may have already arrived when the galloping rider reigned up and thrust his sealed document to G. Sellick Silliman. As a crowd gathered, Silliman opened the letter and said: "Friends, news from your King, hear it." He read Palmer's alarm. While the rider waited the committee endorsed the letter:

> "Fairfield, Saturday 22 April 8 o'clock, for warded as received by express from New Haven
>
> G. Sellick Silliman
> Thaddeus Burr
> Job Bartram
> Andrew Rowland
> Jonathan Sturges Committee"

It is at this point that the letters which had missed Bissell by a few hours at Pomfret on Thursday morning caught up with him. A second rider who remains nameless arrived at the Burr mansion with the following news which was added to Palmer's letter:

"Since the above written, we received the following by second express:

Thursday, 3 o'clock afternoon

Sir: I am this moment informed by express from Woodstock taken from the mouth of the express that arrived there 2 of the clock afternoon, that the contact between the first brigade that marched to Concord was still contining this morning at the town of Lexington to which said brigade had retreated. That another brigade said to be the second mentioned in the letter of this morning had landed with a quantity of artillery at the place where they first did. Provincials were determined to prevent the two brigades from joining their strength if possible and remain in great need of Succour.

N.B. The regulars when in Concord burnt the courthouse, took two pieces of cannon which they rendered useless, and began to take up Concord Bridge upon which Captain Davis who with many on both sides were soon killed then made an attack on the king's troops on which they retreated to Lexington.

I am your humble servant
Eb. Williams

Col. Obadiah Johnson
Canterbury.

P.S. Mr. McFarling of Plainfield, merchant, has just now returned from Boston by way of Providence who conversed with an express from Lexington who further informed that about 4,000 of our troops had surrounded the first brigade above mentioned who were on a hill in Lexington, that the action continued and there were about 50 of our men killed and 150 of the regulars as near as they could determine when the express came away. It would be expedient for every man to go who is fit and willing."

"The above is a true copy as received by express from New Haven and attested to by the Committee of Correspondence from town to town.

Attest. Jonathan Sturges
Andrew Rowland
G. Sellick Silliman
Thaddeus Burr
Job Bartram "

A few days later the Burr mansion received new guests. John Hancock, Sam Adams, Aunt Lydia Hancock, and Dorothy Quincy arrived from Lexington where they had been warned by Paul Revere and William Dawes on the night of April 18. The two women remained at Fairfield while Adams and Hancock continued on to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia on May 10th. Hancock and Dorothy Quincy were married on August 28 in the Burr mansion.

Fairfield is the last Connecticut endorsement, and it would be interesting here to view the effect of the news elsewhere in the colony.

In all, 4,000 Connecticut men from 48 towns are listed on the rolls of those who participated in the military response to the alarm. A letter dated Wethersfield, April 23, describes the scene there as follows:

> "We are in motion here, and equipt from the town yesterday, one hundred young men, who cheerfully offred their service, twenty-days provision and 64 rounds per man. They are all well armed and in high spirits. My brother has gone with them and others of the first property. Our neighboring towns are all arming and moving. Men of the first character shoulder their arms and march off for the field of action. We shall by night have several thousands from this colony on their march. We fix on our standards and drums the colony arms, with the motto 'qui transtulit sustinet' round it in letters of gold, which we construe this: 'God who transplanted us hither, will support us'."

As the news of conflict spread beyond Fairfiled its effect can be traced by brief reports in personal diaries and local town records. In Southport near Fairfield Eleazer Bulkley remembered: "... at the close of this month (April, 1775) the inhabitants were panic struck at the news, by a messenger on horseback of the battle of Lexington, and who wished our inhabitants to repair to Fairfield where they would consult on measures suitable to the present emergency."

One may wonder why Joseph Palmer had chosen to add the bearer's name to his urgent appeal for help. One explanation was the need for complete confidence in the report. In September 1774 there had been an alarm quite similar to this which later proved to be entirely false. Connecticut men had responded in great numbers then and the repetition of such a debacle would not be taken lightly. That the document did succeed in dispelling any doubts in its readers is evidenced by the following report which appeared in the New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury of April 24, 1775:

> "Yesterday morning we had reports in this city from Rhode Island and New London that an action had happened between King's troops and the inhabitants of Boston, which was not credited but about 12 o'clock an express arrived with the following account VIZ: Watertown, Wednesday morning near 10 o'clock ... and Palmer's letter and its Connecticut endorsements are printed in detail."

In many places along the route Bissell's news created disturbances and excitement, but in New York City it caused a riot which developed into armed revolt. The mails were stopped and opened and letters read; a mob broke open the city arsenal and forcibly removed 1,000 stand of arms. The entire city became one continuous scene of riot, tumult and confusion. Troops were enlisted, loyalists were threatened, and the government considered several repressive actions, but because the revolt was too wide spread decided to do nothing and wait for it to cool down. On May 1st a committee of 100 was chosen to act in the 'present alarm-

ing emergency' and assumed control of the city. Loyalists were forced to flee and British troops were embarked on the ship "Asia" to prevent a clash with the excited people.

In a letter published in the Connecticut Courant of Monday, May 4, 1775, the New York committee wrote to the Hartford committee:

> "... The Constitutional post office is now rising on the ruins of the parliamentary one, which is just expiring in convulsions..."

Back in Watertown the Massachusetts Committee of Safety was recommending the establishment of an independent postal system. A new list of patriotic post offices was published in May showing one in every large town from Portsmouth, N.H. to Williamsburg, Va. So quickly and completely was the conversion that on May 4th the last of the parliamentary postriders were discharged for lack of funds. The Continental Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin to head a committee to set up the colonial postal system.

There is little in the New York endorsement to reveal the excitement in the city:

> "New York Committee Chamber 4 o'clock Sunday afternoon April 23, 1775, received the within account by express and forwarded by express to New Brunswick with directions to stop at Elizabethtown and acquaint the committee there with the foregoing particulars.
>
> By order of the Committee
> Isaac Law, Chairman.
>
> The committee at New Brunswick are requested to forward this to Philadelphia."

The postal route from New York to Philadelphia had been improved by Benjamin Franklin in 1753 to include a sailboat trip from Manhattan to Elizabethport and from there to New Brunswick, Princeton and Trenton. At Elizabethtown the letter was copied by Elias Boudinot in the evening of April 23, although no endorsement was added to Palmer's dispatch. Bissell continued to ride throughout the night. By now the moon, in its third quarter on the night of the 18th, had grown dim and the route across the New Jersey flatlands was tiring and hypnotic. Three more stops were made that night before finally arriving in Philadelphia.

> "New Brunswick, April 24, 2 o'clock in the morning
> received the above express and forwarded to Princetown by
>
> William Oake
> James Nielson
> Azariah Dunham Committee."

"Princetown, Monday April 24, 4 o'clock and forwarded to Trenton by

Thomas Wiggins
Jonathan Baldwin
Committee Members."

"Trenton, Monday April 24, 9 o'clock in the morning received the above by express and forwarded the same to the Committee of Philadelphia by

Sam Tucker
Isaac Smith Committee."

The news of the battle of Lexington reached Philadelphia at 5 P.M., April 24. The bell in the state house tolled to call 8,000 people to hear the news, and they agreed to associate for the purposes of 'defending with arms, our lives, liberty and property against all attempts to deprive us of them.'

The letter's final endorsement reads:

"Account of the battle of Lexington sent by express from town to town. This is the paper sent to Phidelphia and delivered to me by one of the committee.

(Signed) Eben Hazard.

Nine days later on May 3rd Ebenezer Hazard was appointed deputy postmaster in New York.

The news which had left Watertown, Mass. at 10 A.M. Wednesday, April 19th had arrived five days later in Philadelphia, 350 miles away, at 5 P.M. April 24th. Although it may have been usual for the normal mail to travel this distance in less than two weeks, expresses of this type did beat that time. News of the Bunker Hill battle reached Philadelphia in 6 days and that of General Washington's election in Philadelphia reached Cambridge in nine days.

Philadelphia was preparing for the arrival of the delegates to the Second Continental Congress. They would open the meeting in the wake of open warfare.

Palmer's letter was sent southward to Baltimore and on its arrival the inhabitants seized 1,500 stand of arms in the Provincial magazine. By Saturday April 29th the news had reached Williamsburg, Va. Captain Patrick Henry set out for the capitol with a body of armed men. When the news reached Charlestown, S.C., the colony began to organize itself for defence against possible British attack.

The news spread westward accross the mountains to the frontier and caused a great deal of consternation, as the very existance of these settlements depended upon the eastern suppliers. A group of campers in Kentucky called the place Lexington in celebration of the event.

The Lexington alarm had aroused the spirit and enthusiasm of the American people to the highest level of any period in the war. In every colony there were patriotic resolves and orders for the establishment of military organizations.

The colonies now had something to unite them. Recognizing that a more official bond was needed, the Continental Congress soon adopted the army surrounding Boston and appointed George Washington from Virginia of lead them, thus converting it into a national force with the backing of the Continental Congress.

In the July 7, 1775 entries of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress the following item appears:

> "Passed upon Mr. Isaac Bissell, a postrider's account, amounting as by copy on file, to two pounds one shilling; and a certificate was given him for the committee on accounts."

In the various copies and newspaper accounts of Palmer's letter Bissell's first name is usually spelled "Israel", but in some including the Philadelphia copy it has been spelled "Trail", perhaps a nickname or a copyists's error. In a manuscript copy signed by Silas Dean and owned by the William H. Clemens Library the name of the bearer is given "Mr. Isaac Bissell". Perhaps the July 7th entry is delayed payment for a heroic task performed "in the line of duty".

Israel Bissell returned to East Windsor where he entered service in Capt. W.Wolcott's Co. with his brother Justis in July, 1776. Israel remained in the army for one month, possibly due to the death of his father in 1776. When the war ended the family moved to Middlefield, Mass., where Israel purchased land and in 1784 married Lucy Hancock of Longmeadow. They had four children. Israel died in 1823 at the age of seventy-one in Hinsdale, Mass.

K. Andrew Hamilton
The Father of the American Post

Alex.L. ter Braake

On february 17th, 1692 a remarkable document was signed in London. It granted a British court favorite the power to set up and maintain a post office in the American colonies, a postal monopoly which finds its equivalent only in the broad prerogatives the House of Thurn & Taxis could claim as the imperial postmasters on the European continent. In one important respect, however, the parallel does not hold good. The lordly office holders in Frankfurt, who were highly successful in their personally conducted postal undertakings, could hand down the seal of office to generations of family members, whereas Thomas Neale, the man who accepted the task to create an American post from the British crown, was restricted to a term of twenty-one years, a term he was not able to complete. The Londoner never saw the country that had caught his fancy. A substitute had to conduct Neale's postal business. When he died his debts were left unpaid.

However, Neale's Patent became the instrument that opened the door to the unification of the spotty postal services which were operating on the North American continent. As such it may be called the first step towards the creation of the United Sattes, because prior to 1692 there was not a single force that bound the colonies together, except a far-away sovereign.

The preamble to the royal decree, which gave Neale his patent was perfectly clear on this point. It read as follows:

> "WILLIAM and MARY by the Grace of God &
> To all to whomethese presents shall come
> Greeting
> whereas our Trusty and welbeloved servant Thomas Neale Esquire hath lately humbly represented unto us that there never yet hath bin any post established for the conveying of Letters within or between Virginia Maryland Delaware New Yorke and Northward as far as our Dominions reach in America And that the want thereof hath bin a great hindrance to the Trade of those parts ... grant unto the said Thomas Neale ... full power and authority to erect settle and establish ... within every or any the

> the chief Ports of the several Islands Plantations or Colonies for the receiving and dispatching away of letters and packquetts ..." (k-1)

Whether King William and his consort personally were interested in postal matters or automatically signed such a decree for the simple reason that it was recommended to them by their advisors is hard to say, but an early historian credits His Majesty with much more than a lukewarm concern for this subject. He wrote in 1895:

> "History has yet to recount the merit of William III in economic affairs. He founded the Bank of England, he subsidised the post in Scotland, he gave England two extraordinary men for Postmaster General, Cotton and Frankland, and he perceived the importance of an American Post. He carried the great financial, commercial and postal traditions of the Netherlands to England, and he determined that the colonies should share in the rise of the mother country. A happy solution was found for the legal and fiscal difficulties in the way of the American post." (k-2)

Bracketed with the king Ernst lauded Andrew Hamilton for his part on making the American Post a reality. The ink on the late seventeenth century document that outlined Neale's task and prerogatives was barely dry when this Scottish merchant entered into the postal picture. Hamilton happened to be in London at the time the Patent was negotiated, after having returned from New Jersey where he was serving as Provincial Governor under William Penn (k-3), and had supervised the management of certain properties, owned by a group of British merchants. William Dockwra, the Londoner who a decade earlier had organized the city's penny post, was a member of this group. When it came to recruiting a suitable representative for Neale in America Dockwra recommended Hamilton as an energetic and well-informed person, able to promote a plan for an American post office, and to turn it into a success.

Five months after the Patent had been granted Hamilton returned to the New World. His appointment had been approved by the King, the Postmasters General, and by the business community whose growing commercial interests in the American colonies lauded Neale's initiative. Two main tasks were waiting Hamilton. In the first place it would be necessary to persuade the several colonial governments to join hands and to organize an integrated American postal system under the auspices of the Neale Patent. This was easily the most important part of Hamilton's assignment. He would have to conquer the outspoken individualistic characteristics of the colonies. Each of them had its own ties with the home country. If they did write letters it was to commercial friends over there or to the beloved ones which they had left behind. There was hardly any need for a Virginian tobacco planter to keep up a cor-

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(k-1) Woolley. Mary E.: The Early History of the Colonial Post Office. Philatelic Literature Review, June 1969.

(k-2) C.W.Ernst: Beginning of North American Posts. L'Union Postale, Vol. XX. 1895.

(k-3) Hamilton is often mistaken for his namesake, Andrew Hamilton, who was several years his junior and served as vice governor of Pennsylvania.

respondence with a Knickerbocker in Manhattan island, a merchant in Charlestown, nor with a timberman in Maine. Moreover there were the many particulasisms which kept people apart. No Quaker in Pennsylvania was anxious to establish written contact with a Puritan in Massachusetts.

Hamilton's second problem, after having solved the first one, was to turn the new organization into a financial success. After all Thomas Neale was not embarking on this extraordinary enterprise for the love of it. He intended to make a reasonable profit on his investment.

Upon arrival in New York Hamilton had his plans worked out. He began by sending out a letter to the several colonial governments in which he disclosed his plans and begged them to "ascertain and establish such rates and terms as should tend to quicker maintenance of mutual correspondence among the neighbouring colonies and plantations, and that trade and commerce might be better preserved'. Hamilton followed up with personal visits to the northern governments in order to do the necessary explaining and some sounding out at the same time. He soon realized that besides the establishment of inter-colonial postal services, which would take much of his time and energy, internal postal set-ups were in need of an organizing hand, and that the handling of the outgoring and incoming overseas mail had to be revamped. As an initial step he proposed to the governors that the individual legislatures establish a legal basis for a postal service under the Neale Patent, and that London;s approval of the resulting Acts be requested as soon as possible.

There was one clause in the Neale contract which caused several assembly members to pucker their eye-brows. It read:

> "Wee doe hereby strictly prohibit and forbid all and every person and persons whatsoever to sett up exercise or execute the like Office of Offices within the Islands Colonys and Plantations ..."

Monopolies were not popular in the American colonies, particularly if they were to be in the hands of an outsider. But Hamilton pointed out that another provision in Neale's Patent considerably softened the impact of the first one:

> "... nothing in these p'sents contained shall extend or be construed to extend to restreyne any merchants masters or others from sending any letters or pacquetts to or from the said Plantations or Colonys or any of them by any masters of Ships or other vessels or by any other person or persons which such merchants masters or others will specially imploy or intrust for the carriage of the same according to their respective direceons..."

He told his listeners that it would remain possible for people to entrust their messages to the masters of ships, be it coastwise

or across the high seas.

Hamilton's success in selling the fundamentals of the "American Post Office" varied from colony to colony. Much depended on the character of the local economy, but also on the people's willingness or reluctance to accept progressive ideas. Historians who have recorded the reception of the Neale proposals in the several colonies are far from clear on the subject. Their opinions often contradict each other. The fact that it all happened almost three centuries ago, that in those days people's reactions were seldom reduced to writing, and that whatever was recorded in provincial council minutes and other documents has been subject to the hazards of human neglect and material decay, of war and fire, with the result that it is seldom possible to consult original sources. In some cases one could be easily misled by the seemingly cooperative words of a piece of legislation and the fact that its provisions were never put into effect like Virginia did (See Chapter L). However, it seems abundantly clear that the reactions varied from eagerness to go along with Hamilton's presentations on one hand, as the case was in the colony of New York, to outright rejection on the other as was initially decided by the Maryland legislature. North Carolina, as the sole exception, simply ignored Neale's postal plans, maybe because Hamilton had no opportunity to present them in person. However, the admininistration of South Carolina, which also received Hamilton's explanations in writing, went along with them. Rhode Island, though it supported the new ideas, never passed a corresponding act (k-4).

Hamilton offered the colonial administrations his personal assistance in drafting the necessary legal measures. Consequently the resulting "Acts for the Encouragement of the Post Office" show a great similarity in wording and in construction. Here follows an example of their preambles:

> "Whereas, several forraigne letters are imported into this part of the Province, therefore, for the maintenance of mutual correspondence, and prevention of many inconveniences that may happen by mis-carriages of the same, and that an office may be managed so that safe dispatch may be had, which is most likely to be effected by erecting one General Post Office for that purpose: ..."

One of the principal provisions was that all ship masters were directed, upon arrival, to deliver all their letters to the port city's post office. This legal measure runs as a red thread through all the postal rules and regulations of the 17th and 18th centuries.

But the main purpose of Hamilton's efforts was the establishment of inter-colonial postal services. To a certain extent he was successful in persuading the various colonial assemblies to include the necessary provisions to that effect, particularly in the northern half of the country. The lack of postal roads connecting the

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(k-4) W.R. Staples: Annals of the Town of Providence (Collections of the Rhode Island Historical Society. Vol. 5, p. 614).

colonies remained an insurmountable stumbling block in the south. This difficulty was partly offset by carriage of the mail by coast-wise shipping.

Due to the fact that each colony had a different currency difficulties arose to establish satisfactory postage rates in intercolonial postal traffic. Again Hamilton was able to offer a solution, though he could hardly be expected to foresee what economic and monetary problems would arise in the future.

He met with more opposition from the provincial governments when the discussions switched from organizing the inter-colonial correspondence to postal services under the Neale Patent within these governments' own territories. Here he tred on sacred ground. It meant interference with prerogatives which had been established as a natural outgrowth of their sovereign rights, though probably no local politician had ever given any thought to applying these rights to the postal services. It meant that postal returns on local letters would flow into the Neale treasury, that the opening of new postal roads would be subject to an outsider's approval.

With endless patience, great tact, and persuasive arguments Hamilton defended his proposals. By an act, passed by the New York legislature on November 11, 1692 it was decided:

> "... that there be from henceforth, A Generall Letter Office erected and established in Some Convenient places within the City of New York from whence all Letters and Pacquet's whatsoever may be with Speed and Expedition Sent into any part of our Neighbouring Colony's and Plantations on the main Land and Continent of America or to any other of their Majesties Kingdom's and Dominions beyond the Seas ... and that one Master of the Said Generall Letter Office shall from time to time be appointed by the said Andrew Hamilton ..."

And as a matter of basic principle it was also enacted:

> "... that no Person or Persons whatsoever or body Politick or Corporal other than the Post Master Generall aforesaid shall presume to carry recarry or deliver Letters for hire ..."

The essential principles of Neale's plan could not have been better expressed than in this piece of legislation. Legal steps of a similar nature were taken by a number of other colonies, among them Rhode Island, Massachusetts and South Carolina. However serious objections arose in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. Eventually the first two of these overcame their problems, but Virginia never joined the others. The situation in the Old Dominion was complicated by the fact that on March 5, 1693 its Legislature passed a bill "for encourageing the erecting of a Post Office in this country" before Hamilton's connection with the American post office had been

discloed to them (k-5). As already indicated the interpretation of the facts as recorded by a number of 20th century authors (k-6) is somewhat confusing, but the result of it all was that this 1693-act never went into effect, nor was it amended. Hamilton could not agree with the set of postage rates proposed by the Virginians, and they did not want to allow Neale any assurance of the business. A monopoly was unacceptable to them. One author concludes that "as a consequence Virginia remained for a generation isolated from the postal system which the other colonies had accepted and made effective". The prevailing feelings can best be summarized by the words: "please, leave us alone." Virginians were not anxious to have closer contacts with the other colonies. They did not need them. Whatever letter writing they did was with the home country and was carried by the tobacco ships which were regularly sailing between the York River and the British ports.

One would have expected that Hamilton would have had a hard time to convince the colonists of the fairness of the proposed postal rates. However, it appeared that the majority of those who were supposed to foot the postal bill were prepared to do so. Hard-boiled business men as most of them were, they did not particularly like to pay any such charges whatsoever, but could find justification for a fair price for a well-performed service. Hamilton pointed out that with properly scheduled and regularly maintained postal connections between commercial centers there would be hardly any more need for spending money on hiring expensive express riders as they often had to do in the past. It would help the intercolonial trade and the growing volume of mail would easily offset the payment of postmaster's commissions and the annual remuneration of the postmaster general too. It would still leave a justifiable return on the patentholder's investment, to which he was entitled. Moreover there was a provision in the contract which gave proof of the reasonable intensions of Messrs. Neale and Hamilton. They were "entituled" to receive "for the postage or conveyance of all such letters and Packquetts as shall be soe dispatcht sent away carried and delivered such rates and sumes of money ... as the Planters and others will freely agree to give for their letters and Packquetts upon the first settlement of such Office or Offices". In other words the users of the American postal system would be given an opportunity to voice their opinions on postal matters, a concept which sounds almost ultra-modern.

In spite of opposition and practical obstacles which Hamilton met he was able to overcome most of them, one exception being Virginia's aloofness. His personal qualities made him the ideal postal ambassador. He offered his proposals in a spirit of accomodation and though some colonial officials were hard to convince, like William Penn, they all recognized a helping friend in him.

As early as May, 1693 a weekly intercolonial mail service was started between Piscataway (Portsmouth, N.H.) and Newcastle on the Delaware River, a route which was operated in five stages. During the

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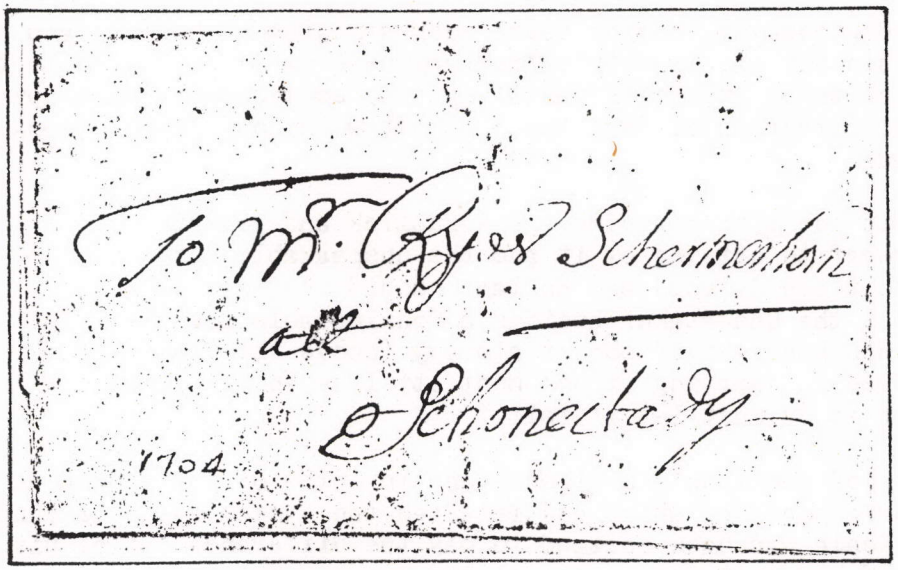
(k-5) William Smith: History of the Post Office in British North America (1920), pp. 13-15.

(k-6) Fairfax Harrison: The Colonial Post Office in Virginia. William and Mary College Quarterly Magazine, April 1924. p. 74.

first four years the revenue of this service was equal to 39 percent of the expenses, though the operation seemed to have been profitable on the northern, more densely populated part of the route, where commercial interests were more centralized. Official correspondence, which was handled free of charge, formed a sizable psrt of the postal traffic. Some of the colonial governments were agreeable to paying a fixed amount per annum to compensate for this service, though it seems that very few reimbursements wre actually received by Hamilton.

Not many letters have survived which were processed by post offices under the Neale Patent. A private letter is depicted on page 2 of the Preface to Part II of this book. It originated in Boston and was addressed to Salem. It is interesting to note that the cover carries a postal marking in manuscript though Hamilton's establishment required postmasters to "mark every letter with a print." This Boston postmark is the oldest colonial marking and to this author's knowledge no earlier date than January 14, 1703 has been reported.



K-1. New York, March 26, 1704, by sloop to Schenectady. (Faulstich collection).

Figure K-1 shows a letter which was written in New York on March 26, 1704 and addressed to Schenectady. Part of it read: "... the sloop being ready to sail I have not farther to add att this time ..." Apparently the writer made his own arrangements for the conveyance of his letter. No rate of postage is noted on the cover. For an undisclosed reason the New York "Act for the Encourageing A Post Office" of November 11, 1692 provided: "... that no Letters goeing up or comeing down' Hudsons River ... Shall be carryed to the Post Office ..."

In 1699, after six years of hard work, Hamilton returned to

London where he submitted a memorial to the "Lords Comrs. of his Majesty's Treasury" im which he reported on the results of his endeavors to "manage the Post Office in North America." The document, dated April 26, 1699 opened with a recitation of the "good Effects" the Post Office had produced:

> "It encreases Trade and Correspondence betwixt the Colonys there.
> It affords Merchts. more frequent apportunitys of Corresponding with Europe.
> It contributes much towards putting the Kings subjects in security in time Of War by ye. frequent Conveyance of Intelligence when allarms happen, for want of wch. many familys have been cutt off before the settling of the Post.
> And it readily conveyes Court Packets from the colony, where they are delivered to those they are addressed without any expense to the Crowne, or said Colony, besides many other advantages." (k-7)

The Lords, however, having heard such a statement before, and being responsible for his Majesty's treasury were more interested in the financial results of America's postal system, consequently must have read the next paragraph of Hamilton's report with considerable concern. It read:

> "But not with standing these Publick and private benefits arising by it and the unspeakable Loss to these Colonys and England should the Post fall Yet the Undertaker besides a Considerable sume he hath been out of pocket already (above the Produce in carrying it on) must still be in disburse of it or must let it fall."

In spite of Hamilton's diligence and in spite of the increased volume of correspondence which had resulted the system was operating in the red. Neale had been obliged to pay the difference out of his own pocket and his postmaster general had never received his salary. It was clear that drastic measures would have to be taken and Hamilton presented a list of them in his memorial, the most important of which were a rigorous control on the delivery of transatlantic letters by ship captains and an increase of the postal rates.

The first was a matter which had given raise for complaints many years earlier and was destined to do so for many decades to come. In Hamilton's words:

> "The method at present used to get letters transported to America is this -
>
> The Masters bound thither put up bags in Coffee houses wherein the letters are put and for which

---

(k-7) This and following quotations are from the British official records.

one penny a letter is usually paid and 2 d. if it exceeds a single letter.
This is Lyable to several abuses.
First any one under pretence that he wants to have his letters up again may come to these bags and take out other mens letters and thereby discover the secrets of Merchants and this in their power intirely to withdraw them.
2ndly. Severall Masters upon their arrival often keep up letters till they have disposed of their Loading and are ready to saile again, and then Drop them to the great hurt of those that are concerned."

Hamilton's proposed solution to this problem was simple and to the point. He said:

"If Masters were obliged to receive letters to and from America from the Post Office only, in Mailes and delivered them so at the first post office they arrive at; there would be saved to the King a penny a letter, which now Masters of ships and passengers Receive, for every American letter they deliver at the respectice Offices and whereas now many letters are delivered by Masters and passengers themselves to the persons concerned, all these letters would then be brought into the Post Office to the encrease of that Revenue."

In keeping with postal philosophies of the period the increase of the revenue appeared to be more important in Hamilton's Argueing than the improved services to be rendered by the postal system to its customers.

In order to produce a more direct financial result of the colonial postal operations Hamilton suggested an increase in the rates for inland letters. He further presented the officials in London with:

"A Calculation what Charge will carry ye Post from Newcastle in Pensivania (the southern terminal of the system at that time) to James City in Virginia about 400 Miles".

He concluded:

"As I have laid ye first foundation of ye American Post soe if ye King think fitt to continue me on this trust I will take upon me ye managemt. of ye whole from Piscataway 70 Miles eastward of Boston to James City in Virginia wch. is 800 & odd miles for £ 300 p Annum and will keep exact Accts. of ye produce."

But Hamilton did not succeed in convincing the Postmasters General in London that such measures as he proposed would bring the de-

sired results. Cotton and Frankland argued that the way to improve the post office revenue was "to make the intercourse of letters easy on the people". An increase of postal rates would have the opposite effect.

Disappointed with the results of his mission Hamilton returned to America. Even more disappointed was Thomas Neale, who had hoped to be assured of a steady income from his patent. Since he could not absorb the losses any longer he tried to induce the royal postmasters to buy him out:

> "I humbly beg leave of your Lordships to add yt. wn. his Majesty shall at any time be inclinable to take this Post Office under his Immediate direction I humbly make a proffer to make a Surrender of yo. pattent upon payment of ₤ 5000 or ₤ 1000 p. ann. for the remaining Tearme of ye. Pattent."

Since Neale failed in his attempt he assigned the contract to Hamilton and to Robert West, a man to whom he was financially obliged.

In 1703 Andrew Hamilton died. Up to his last hour he was convinced that his creation was a healthy one and would eventually be able to support itself. He had instilled his belief in his wife and in West. They petitioned for a further grant covering a period of twenty-one years, but the Postmasters General did not agree to it. As a matter of fact they now strongly believed in a discontinuation of postal operations by private interests. As a result the government finally purchased the rights of the two holders in 1707.

Thus ended the short era of the Neale Patent. It had brought America the basis for a unified postal system on which future organizers could build. This fundamental success was due to the hard work, the creative ideas, and the singular character of Andrew Hamilton. Governor Francis Lovelace of New York may have been the orininator of the first postal service betwen New York and Boston, but Hamilton fully deserves the title of "Father of the American Post".

L. Colonial Williamsburg

Alex.L.ter Braake

Each American post office has a story to tell, stories which could fill rows of volumes with interesting facts. They could contribute enormously to a proper understanding of our country's postal past. For the present purpose the operation of Williamsburg's post office has been chosen for a short portrayal, being a worthy representative of those early public service stations. It played an important role among the colonial and revolutionary post offices, if only for the fact that it was the cradle of a sizable number of the town's burgers destined to fill positions of prominence in the nation's postal structure.

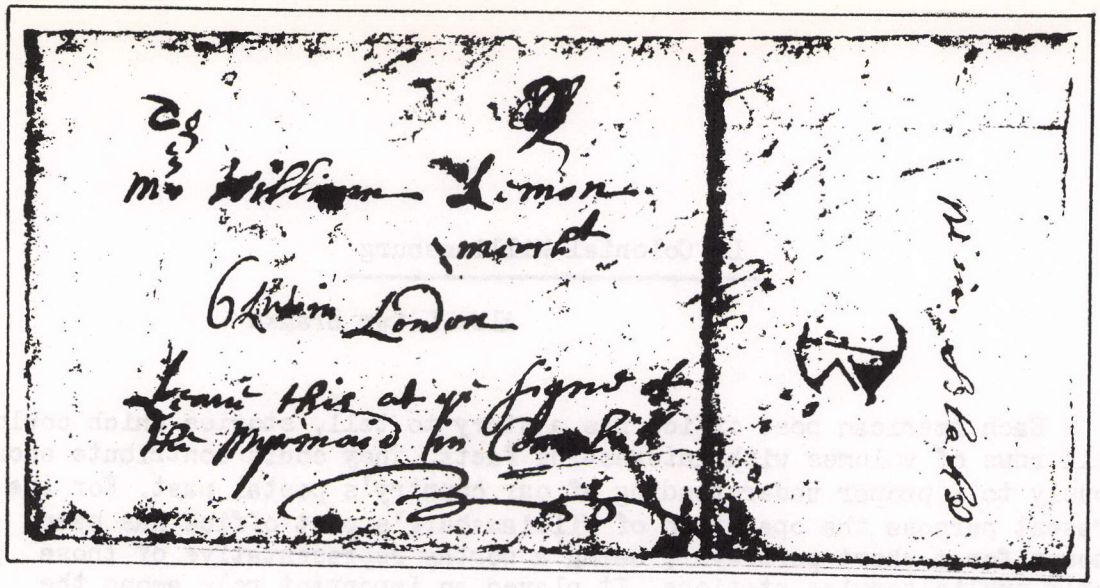
Long before a post office was opened in Williamsburg written messages were sent and received in Virginia. A major part of this scanty mail consisted of correspondence with the home country, though occasionally a few letters were exchanged with writers in other American colonies. One of those in the latter category, written in Virginia's old capital, James City (James Town), and dated 1638, is exhibited in figure B-2. It went by ship to St. Maries, the principal town of Maryland at that time, where Lord Baltimore held office.

In 1658 the General Assembly of Virginia passed an Act for the "Dispatch of Publique letters", which ordered the conveyance of such papers from plantation to plantation until they reached "the place and person directed, under the penaltie of one hogshead of tobacco, for each default." As a system it worked apparently, though not too satisfactorily because three years later it was found necessary to increase the penalties. The two Acts have been reproduced in figures C-2 and -3.

For many decades the transatlantic mail was transported by the ships of the "tobacco fleet", which formed the life line of Virginia's economy. Some of the plantation owners operated their own ships plying between the York River landings and British ports. One of those early overseas letters is shown in figure L-1. Its date line read: "Virginia 30 of June 1679". A postcript at the bottom of the one-page message sheds some light on the whereabouts of its writer:

> "You may direct your letters to me Minister of
> New Kent at Mr. Peter Butt's house in ye freshes
> of York River."

It will be noted that the letter's address directs it to "ye sign of the Myrmaid in Cornhill", a London street where several coffee houses were



L-1. Virginia, June 30, 1679, to London. Bishop mark AU(GUST)/23 on reverse. (Frank Staff).

located. After it had passed the post office on August 23rd Mr. Lemon, a merchant, was supposed to pick it up in one of those establishments.

It is certain that at that time no post office was in operation in Virginia through which such transatlantic mail could have been funneled. Letter writers had to make their own arrangements with ship's captains or their agents.

During the 4th year of William and Mary's reign a fundamental change in this primitive situation was brought about in the American colonies when a patent was issued by the Crown to Thomas Neale for the purpose of "creating post offices" on the North American continent, and when Neale's deputy, Andrew Hamilton, was put in charge of the postal project. The subject is more generally discussed in a separate chapter.

It soon became apparent that Hamilton's plans met with serious objections in Virginia. Formally the Burgesses, assembled in James City, passed an "Act for Encourageing the erecting of a Post Office in this country", but its provisions were such that one could hardly speak of encouragement. Hamilton was allowed to open post offices in the Dominion, but there was no assurance at all that he would get the business. A copy of the Act is exhibited here. The "Exceptions, out of this act" were such that every-one was free to use the post office or not leaving the situtation virtually unchanged.

Before new postal laws became effective in Virginia as well as in the other American colonies the government of the Dominion decided to move its seat from James City to the Midden Plantation. At that occasion the name of the place was changed to Williamsburg.

ACT V.

Edi. 1733, and 1752.

An act for encourageing the erecting of a Post Office in this country.

Preamble, reciting an act of parliament, which authorises Thomas Neale, esq. to establish a post office, in the several islands and American colonies.

WHEREAS the erection and establishment of a post office within this collony is conceived to be of generall concernement and of great advantage for the increase and preservation of trade and comerce therein for thereby speedy and safe dispatch may be had, and whereas theire majesties by theire letters patents under the greate seale of England bearing date the 17th day of February in the 4th yeare of theire reigne have given unto Thomas Neale esq. his executors administrators and assignes full power and authority to erreet, settle and establish within the cheife portes of theire severall islands colonyes and plantations in America, an office or offices for the receiving and dispatching away of letters and pacquetts, and to receive, send and deliver the same under such rates and sumes of money as the planter or inhabitants should agree to give or should be proportionable to the rates for the carriage of letters ascertained in the act of parliament for the erecting and establishing a post office to hold and enjoy the same for the terme of one and twenty yeares under the yearely rent of six shillings and eight pence as by the said letters patents relation thereunto being had will more fully appeare.

General post office established;

and a post office in each county.

Be it therefore enacted by the governour, councell and burgesses of this present Generall Assembly and the authority thereof, and it is hereby enacted, That if the said Tho. Neale his substitutes substitute or deputy shall by virtue of the said letters patents erect settle and establish in some convenient place within this colony and dominion one generall post office from whence all letters and pacquetts whatsoever may with expedition be sent unto any part of this colony and to every other place whatsoever and at which said office all returnes and answers may be received and shall alsoe in each county within this colony, setle and establish one or more post office or post offices as is in this act hereinafter provided, then it shall and may be lawfull to and for the said Tho. Neale Esqr. his substitutes deputyes by him thereunto sufficiently authorised to demand, have, receive and take for the postage and conveyancy for all

such letters which he or they shall soe convey, carry or send post, according to the severall rates and sumes of currant money hereafter mentioned, not to exceed the same, that is to say, for the post of every letter not exceeding one sheet to or from any place not exceeding fourscore miles distance from the place where such letter shall be received three pence, and for the like post of every letter not exceeding two sheets six pence, and for the like post of every pacquet of letters proportionable unto the said rates, that is to say, for every sheet not exceeding two sheets to advance five pence and noe more, and for the like post of every pacquet of writs, deeds and other things after the rate of twelve pence for every ounce weight, and for the post of every letter not exceeding one sheet above the distance of fourscore English miles from the place where the same shall be received four pence half penny, and for the like post of a letter not exceeding two sheets nine pence, and proportionable to rates for the like post of all pacquets of letters, that is to say, for every sheet exceeding two sheets to advance four pence half penny and noe more, and for the like post of every pacquet of writs, deeds and other things after the rates of eighteen pence for every ounce weight; *Provided alwaies*, that all merchants accounts and bills of exchange, invoyces and bills of loading are and shall be understood to be allowed at the rate and price of double letters, and shall be understood to be allowed to pass at the same rate and payment.

Rates of postage.

Proviso as to merchants accounts & bills of exchange, &c.

Provided alwaies, That nothing in this present act contained shall extend or construed to extend to restraine any marchants masters or others from sending any letters or pacquetts to or from this collony by any masters of ships or other vessells or by any other person or persons which such merchants masters or others will specially imploy or intrust for the carriage of the same according to the respective dereections, *provided likewise*, that all letters superscribed for theire majesties and countries service comonly called state letters which are ussually carried postage free in England shall pass free throughout this collony; *provided likewise*, that the said Thomas Neale his executors administrators or assignes or such person or persons as he or thay shall nominate shall and will from time to time

This act not to prevent merchants from sending letters by masters of vessels, or others.

Not to extend to public letters.

Duty of postmaster in relation to letters

P

received from England, & to be sent there, and to other foreign parts;

upon his or theire receipt of any letters or pacquets which shall be directed into this collony from England or any other parts, or from any parts or places within this collony, to any other parts or places within the same, cause the said letters or pacquetts to be forthwith dispersed caried and delivered in the severall parts of this collony as they shall be directed, and from time to time as he or they or any of them shall collect or receive any letters or pacquets to be sent from this collony to England shall dispatch and send away the same by the first ship that shall be bound for any part of England, to be there delivered to the next deputy postmaster and where any letters or pacquetts shall be derected from this collony to some other foreigne parts that he or they shall dispatch and send away the same according to theire respective derections by the first conveniancy of carriage or conveyance thereof, and that those services shall be performed with care and without any neglect or delay at the rates and prices before mentioned.

and, in relation to public orders from the governor and council.

Provided likewise, That all publique orders which the governour councell and other theire majesties officers for the time being shall issue out from time to time for the imediate service of theire majesties and this countrie shall be dispatched and distributed by the respective post officers within this collony without any charge, *provided likewise,* that the said Tho. Neale Esqr. his substitutes or deputies shall at theire owne proper costs and charges erect setle and establish or cause to be erected setled or established one or more post office or post offices in every respective county of this collony at the most convenient places of the same; except alwaies out of this act letters of masters and merchants which shall be sent by any master of any shipes barques or other vessells of merchandise or by any other person imployed by them for the carriage of such letters aforesaid according to the respective derections, and alsoe except letters to be sent by any private friend or friends in theire wayes of joyrneye or travell or by any messenger or messengers sent on purpose for or concerning the private offices of any person or persons whatsoever.

To establish a post office, in each county.

Exceptions, out of this act.

Limitation of act.

Provided alwaies, That this act shall continue in force for and during the terme granted by theire majesties letters pattents before receited unto Tho. Neale

MARCH 1692-3—5th WILLIAM & MARY. 115

Esqr. his executors administrators and assignes under the greate seale of England bearing date the 17th day of February in the 4th yeare of theire reigne and noe longer.

L-2d. W.W.Hening: The Statutes at Large, Vol. III, New York, 1823. Pp. 112-115.

The first reference to the existence of a post office in Williamsburg, though a very informal one, is found in a letter written by Col. John Custis in 1718, which read as follows:

> "Wee have a damn'd confounded, pretended Post Office here, wch keeps Letters as long as they think fit; it is a general Grievance to ye Country: but am not sure of its being redressed. I desire you to putt all my letters in a small Box; directed to me, and give ym into ye Capt' Charge; and then I may bee in some Hopes of having ym safe and not peep'd into; a Form of Land Piracy to practicable in Virga nowadays ..." (1-1)

Colonel Custis' particular grievance may not have been wide spread among Virginians, but the general sentiment expressed in the letter was fairly common in the colony. People did not like the postal system. Queen Ann's Act of 1711 had brought a change in the postal rates which probably affected the letter writers in the Dominion more than those in the sister colonies, dependant as Virginia's economy was upon written contact mith the British business world. Until the day this Act became effective an overseas letter used to be charged one penny. With one stroke of the governmental pen this rate was made one shilling and three pence. Sending letters via the post office became mandatory. No right-minded Englishman, could call that "cricket" whether he lived on the Thames or on the York River.

For the time being people simply ignored the new-fangled regulations and continued sending their mail by the tobacco ships. But when in 1717 the post office tried to establish "a Post run each Fortnight between Williamsburg and Philadelphia", and began to charge the elevated rates they became indignant and protested that Parliament could levy no tax

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(1-1) John Custis Letter Book, 1717-1741. Library of Congress. Custis was a member of the Committee of Grievances ans Propositions in the House of Burgesses.

without the consent of the General Assembly. In their eyes a postal charge was just another tax. The well versed in legal matters were quick to quote the Act of 1623/4, which read:

> "8. That the Governor shall not lay any Taxes or Ymposition upon the Colony their Lands or Commodities other Way than by the authority of the General Assembly, to be levyed and imployed as the said Assembly shall appoynt."

These were exciting days in Williamsburg. The legislators were determined to thwart the highhanded action of the government in London. They simply forbid the Virginia postmasters to comply with the law. Governor Alexander Spotswood in a letter to the Board of Trade, dated June 24, 1718 explained the dilemma he was faced with:

> "... the Post M'r set up printed Placards, (such as were sent in by the Post M'r Gen'll of Great Britain) at all the Posts, requiring the delivery of all Letters not excepted by the Act of Parliament to be delivered to his Deputys there. No sooner was this noised about but a great Clamour was raised against it. The people were made to believe that the Parl't couldnot Levy any Tax, (for so they call ye Rates of Postage) here without the Consent of the General Assembly. That besides, all their Letters (it said Laws) were exempted because scarce any came in here but what some way or other concern'd Trade; That tho' M'rs should, for the reward of a penny a Letter deliver them, the Post M'r could Demand no Postage for the Conveyance of them, and abundance more to the same purpose, as rediculous as Arrogant. This gave a Handle for framing some Grievances to the Assembly against the new Office; And there upon a Bill is prepared and passed both Council and Burgesses, w'ch, tho' it acknowledges the Act of Parliam't to be in force, does effectually prevent its being ever put in Execution. The first Clause of that Bill Imposes an Obligation on the Post Master to w'ch he is no ways liable by the Act of Parliament. The second Clause lays a penalty of no less than £5 for every Letter he demands or takes from a Board any Ships that stand Decreed to be excepted by the Act of Parliament; and the last Clause appoints ye Stages and the Time of Conveyance of all Letters under an Extravagant Penalty. As it is impossible for the Post Master to know whether the Letters he receives be excepted or not, and y't, according to the Interpreters, Our Judges of the Act of Parl't, all Letters sent from any Merch't, whether the same relate to Merchandize on board or not, are within the exception of the Law, the Post M'r must meddle w'th no Letters at all, or run the hazard of

> of being ruin'd. And the last Clause, besides its Contradiction to the Act of Parliament in applying the Stages, w'ch is expressly Bestowed to the Post Master according to the Instruction of the Sovereign, is so great an impossibility to be complyed w'th that, considering the difficulty of passing the many gr't Rivers, the Post M'r must be liable to the penalty of 20s. for every Letter he takes into his care during the whole Season of the Winter. From whence Yo'r Lop's may judge how well affected the Major part of Our Assembly men are towards ye Collecting this Branch of the King's Revenue, and w'll therefore be pleas'd to Acquit me of any Censure of Refusing Assent to such a Bill." (1-2)

This difference of opinion between the Governor and the representatives of the people was the beginning of a sour relationship, that eventually led to Spotwood's resignation. The result of these bickerings was that Annapolis, the capital of Maryland, remained the southern terminus of the regular post.

Spotswood, however, continued to be a factor to be reckoned with as far as postal matters in America were concerned. In 1730, while on a business visit to London, he was appointed Deputy Postmaster General for North America. He plunged into this enterprise with vigor, planning to secure the inclusion of Virginia in the postal system. In that connection he approached the Governor of Pennsylvania in his letter of July 31, 1730 to whom he wrote of his intention "for settling a regular Post Correspondence which may reach so far southward as through the Colony of Virginia" (See Chapter C. The Grand Line of Post, p. C-21). Finally the Old Dominion was extricated from its postal seclusion.

Spotswood's contribution to the organization of the postal services in the colonies is a part of the many services he rendered to the Crown, Virginia and the colonies as a whole. Too often only mentioned for his introduction of Benjamin Franklin into the postal service, he laid the foundation for later, broader developments and was the first to achieve a coherent system of postal routes in the colonies. He continued as Deputy Postmaster General until his death in 1740. He was succeeded by Head Lynch of Caroline County (1742-43) and Elliot Benger of Spottsylvania County (1743-53), both Virginians.

After the hot 1718 debates in the General Assembly Williamsburg and its post office dropped out of sight for almost two decades until in 1737 the latter is found established in the printery of William Parks, who published Virginia's first newspaper from a building on the Duke of Gloucester Street. The Virginia Gazette gave him an opportunity to bring the good citizens of Williamsburg and the people in the town's vicinity the latest information concerning the postal services.

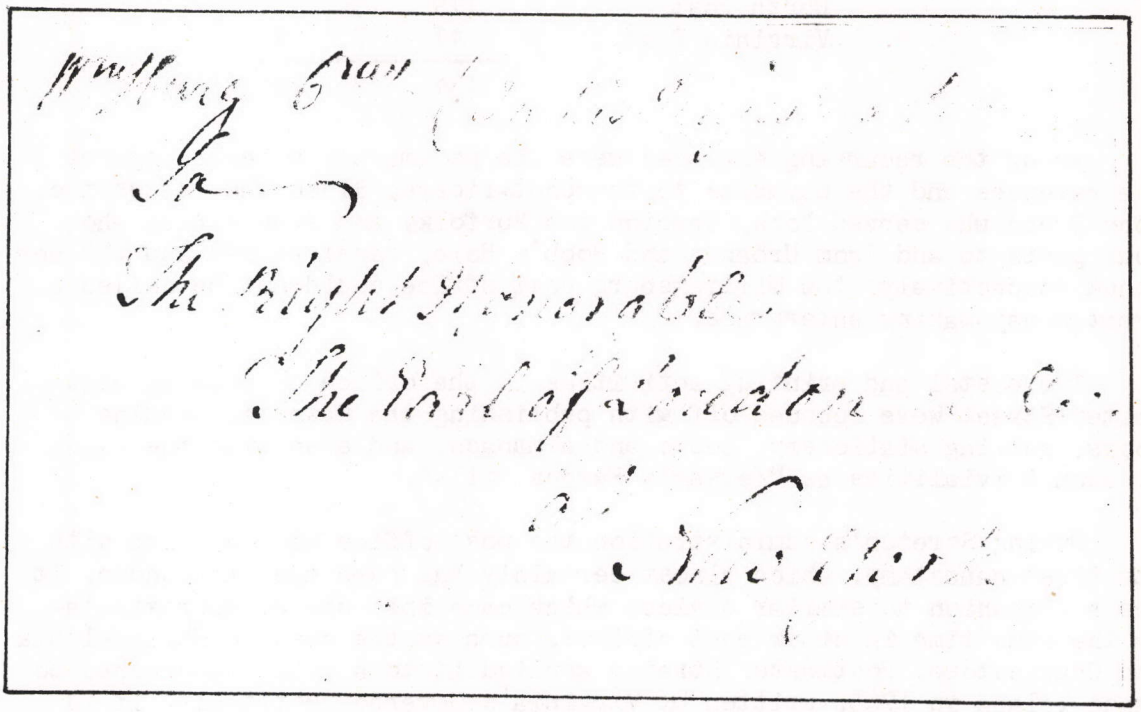
(1-2) R.A.Brock (edit.) The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood. The Virginia Historical Society, 1885, Vol.II, pp. 280-81.

A letter to Philadelphia which was processed by the Williamsburg post office during Parks' administration is displayed in Part II as figure VA 31. It carries the oldest Virginia postmark seen so far. It may be assumed that it was penned on the cover by Parks himself.

In 1750 he died and William Hunter, who had worked in the printery for a number of years as Parks' assistant, succeeded him in both capacities. The estate sold the property, the lot and the building, to the new owner for 163 pounds sterling and 15 shillings.

Three years later Hunter became deputy postmaster general of America, serving as a companion to Benjamin Franklin. Apparently one needed an experienced man who could pay special attention to the postally less developed southern colonies. Hunter's promotion caused the local newspaper to change its colophon to: "The Virginia Gazette, Williamsburg: Printed by William Hunter, at the General Post Office."

In Part II figure VA 32 depicts a letter to New York which was dispatched from Williamsburg before Hunter joined Franklin on a trip to London. During his absence the affairs of the office were taken care off by John Stretch. Figure L-3 is a sample piece of mail which went through his hands in 1757.



L-3. Georgia, March 21, 1757, wartime letter to the Commander in Chief in New York, mailed from Williamsburg. Rated 6 dwts. (Huntington Library, HM 3115).

Few details on the operation of Williamsburg's post office during the fifties have been preserved, though an advertisement in the Gazette

of April 30, 1752, reading:

W A N T E D

Three or four Men, to be employ'd
in the service of the Post Office.
Any such, with good Recommandations,
may meet with good Encouragement,
by applying to the Printer.

gives the impression that the postal business in Williamsburg was flourishing. A Day-book, kept by Hunter on the 1750-1752 operation does not enable the postal historian to draw a picture of the office's transactions.

More specific are the entries in a similar book kept by Hunter's successor, Joseph Royle, who was Williamburg's postmaster from 1761 to 1766. He kept two accounts, one on what was called the North Post, including the revenue from the post offices in Hampton and Norfolk, and secondly the Virginia Post, which covered the postal income received from the other offices in the colony. The partly overlapping 1763 and 1764 figures for a twelve months period are:

	£	sh	d	
North Post	119	15	-	
Virginia Post	11	7	7½	
	131	2	7½	(1-3)

Among the recurring expenses were the postmaster's percentage of the revenues and the payments to the post-riders. Since the latter two, John Bread who served York, Hampton and Norfolk, and John Barnes who rode posts to and from Urbanna and Hobb's Hole, received £40 and £50 per annum respectively, the Williamsburg post office could not be called a great money-making enterprise.

The postal and printing activities in the office on Duke of Gloucester Street were rounded off with publishing the Gazette, binding books, selling stationery, books and almanacs, and even with the sale of such trivialities as "Keyser's Famous Pills".

During Stretch's administration the post office was supplied with its first handstamp, which almost certainly had been made in London. It was a companion to similar devices which came into use at approximately the same time in other post offices, such as the ones in Philadelphia and Charlestown. Postmaster Stretch applied it to a letter addressed to Rhode Island in 1765, written by Virginia's Governor Botetourt. It is shown as figure VA 33 in Part II. The stamp's use was continued until 1775 when the first revolutionary happenings revamped the entire American postal system.

Miss Mary Goodwin wrote an interesting Memorandum on "The Colonial

(1-3) Joseph Royle: Ms. Daybook 1764-1766, Williamsburg. Original at University of Virginia.

Postal System in Virginia" (January 17, 1956) which remained unpublished. In it she compiled her research findings on the subject by gleaning the old issues of the Virginia Gazette and by quoting from other sources. It is of some importance to mention here that Williamsburg could boast of having two newspapers during the sixties and seventies. To the confusion of the historian they both carried the name "The Virginia Gazette". It is needless to say that their political views were not identical, a fact which came into focus when the great issues of 1775 and 1776 devided so many American communities.

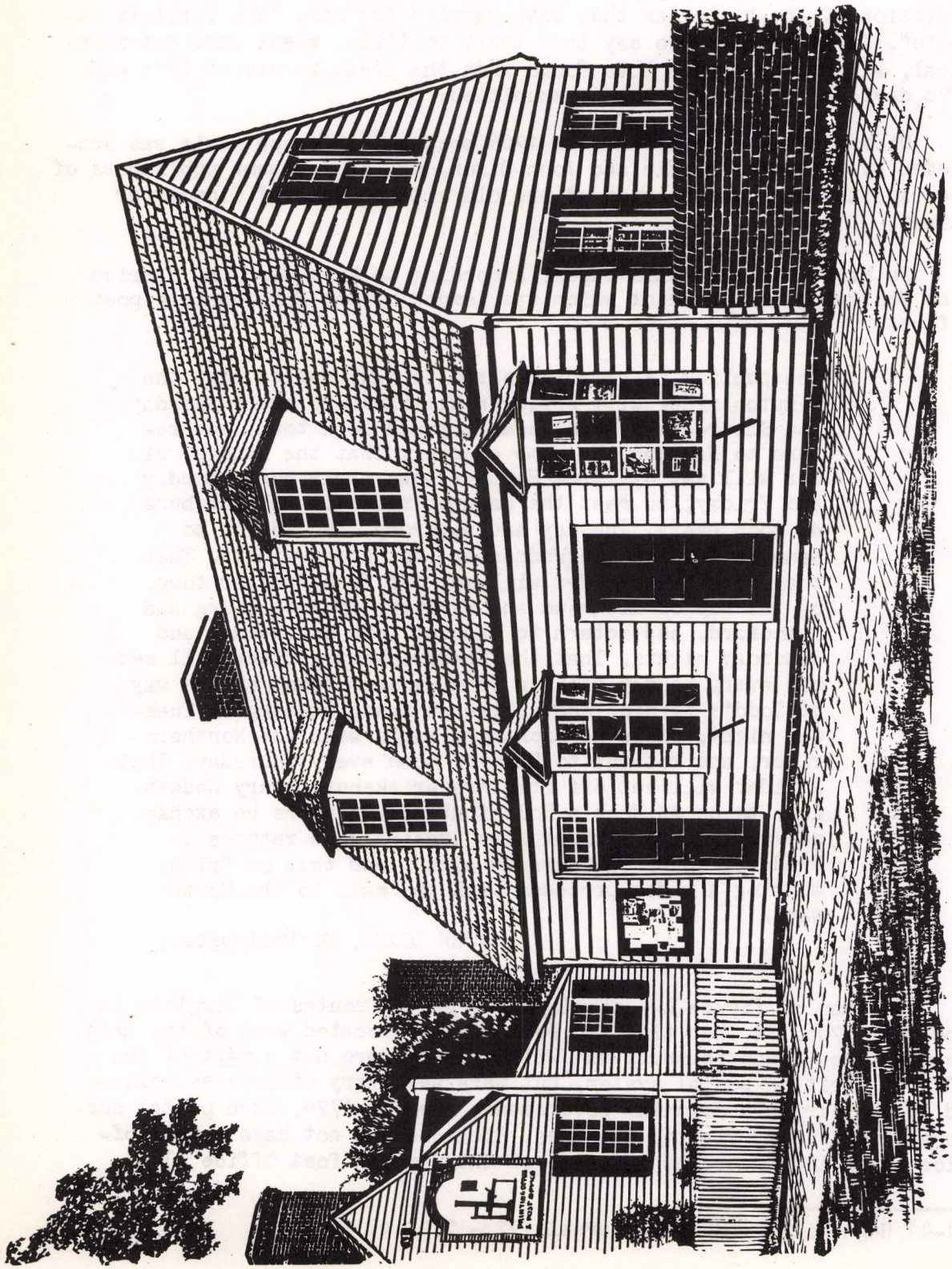
Miss Goodwin reports that in 1766 postmaster Joseph Royle was succeeded by Alexander Purdie and John Dixon, who also became publishers of the Gazette which was printed at the old site on Duke of Gloucester Street.

On March 21, 1766 this paper, according to Miss Goodwin, carried the following announcement which was issued by the Williamsburg post office:

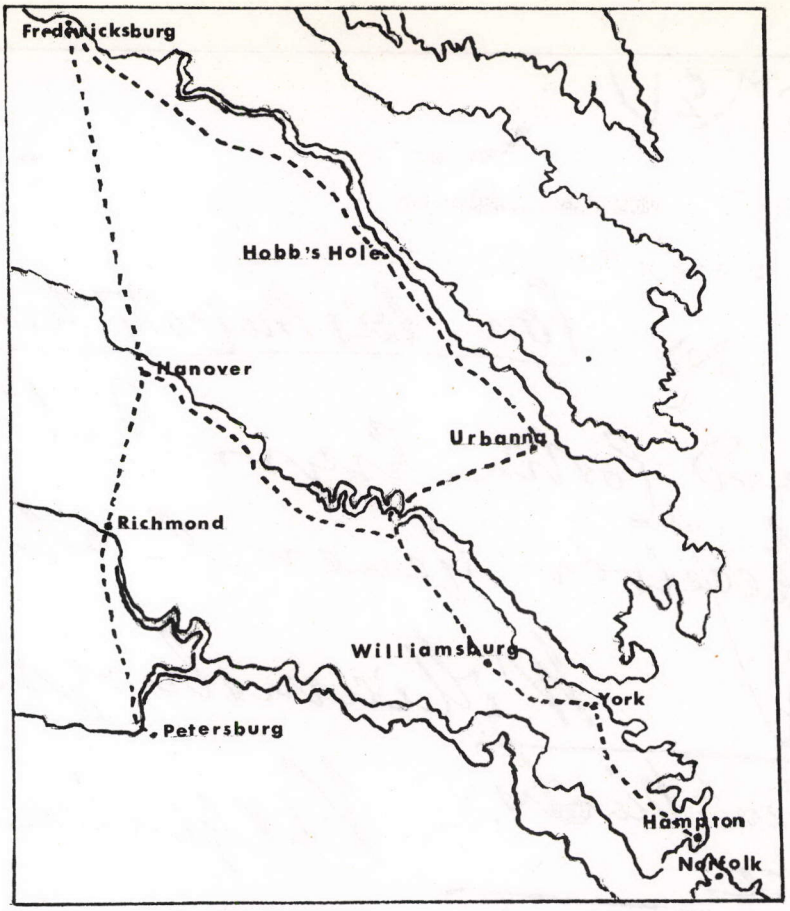
> "The publick is hereby desired to take notice that the Hampton rider will arive in Williamsburg every Tuesday and Saturday at noon, come through York town, and return to Hampton the same evening. That the Hanover rider will set off from Hanover town early every Monday and Friday, to meet the Hampton rider in Williamsburg at noon every Tuesday and Saturday, and return to Hanover town on the Wednesday and Sunday nights. That the James river rider will set off from Hanover town, by the way of Richmond and Warwick, to Petersburg and Blandford, and return to Hanover town on Tuesday and Saturday nights. That the Fredericksburg rider will set out every Monday morning from Hanover town, by the way of Todd's bridge, and arrive at Fredricksburg on Tuesday night, where he exchanges mails with the Northern rider, and returns to Hanover town every Thursday. That a rider will set off from Fredericksburg every Wednesday, to be at Hobb's Hole that night, where he exchanges mails with a rider from Urbanna, and returns to Fredericksburg on Thursday night. And that on Friday morning a rider proceeds with the mail to the Northward.
>
> JOHN DIXON, D. Postmaster,"

The map of figure L-4 displays the postal routes of Virginia in the year 1766. At that time the post offices located west of the main road between Fredericksburg and Williamsburg were not a part of the official British postal system, but were auxiliary offices established by the Virginia colonial government. Even in 1774, when postal surveyer Hugh Finlay visited the area, Richmond did not have a post office operating under the auspices of the General Post Office (1-4).

(1-4) Hugh Finlay: Survey Journal 1773-1774. p. 129.



Postoffice in Williamsburg.
(Colonial Williamsburg Foundation).

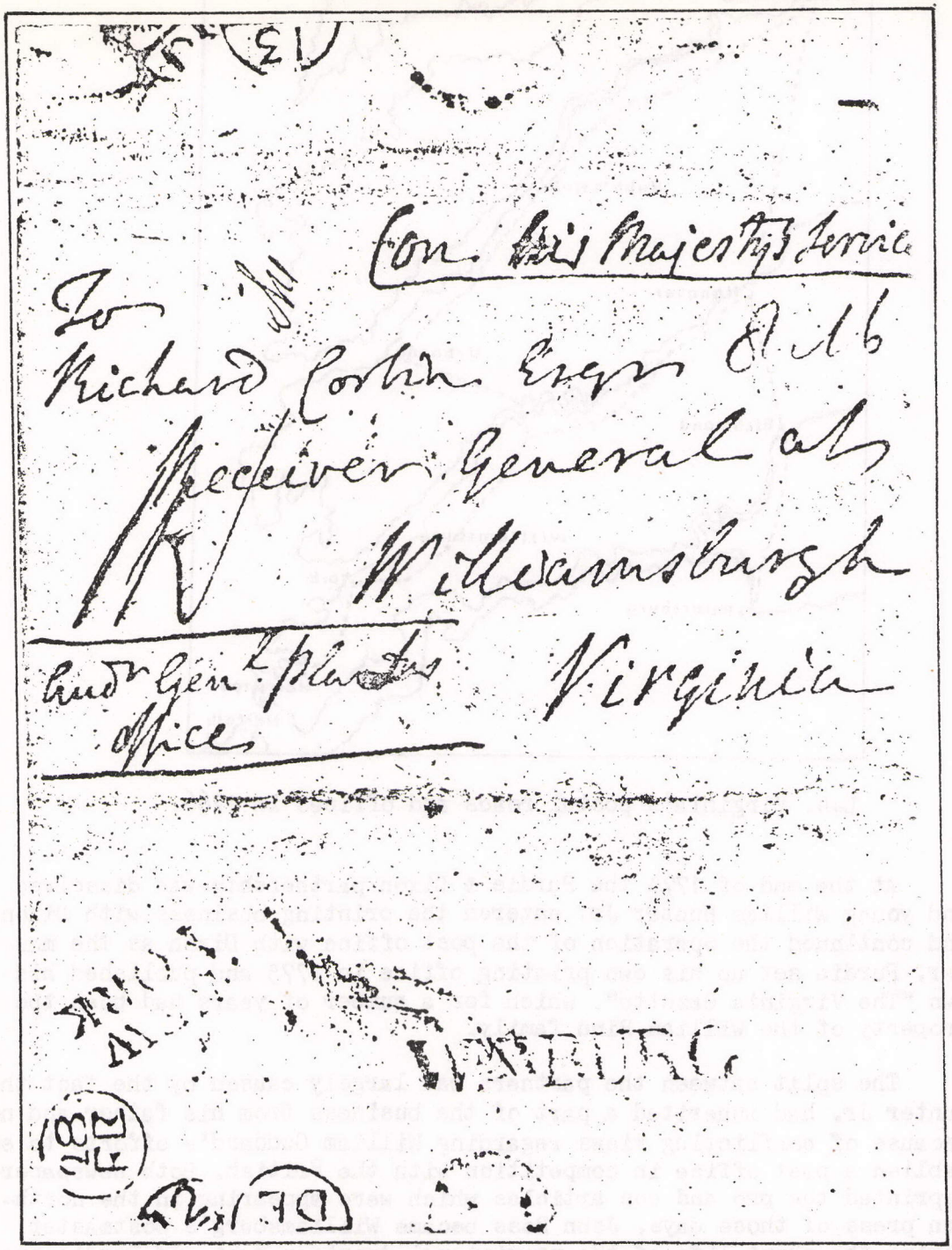


L-4. Virginia's postal roads and offices in 1766.

At the end of 1774 the Purdie & Dixon partnership was dissolved and young William Hunter Jr. entered the printing business with Dixon and continued the operation of the post office with Dixon as the master. Purdie set up his own printing office in 1775 and published his own "The Virginia Gazette", which for a number of years had been the property of the William Rind family.

The split between the partners was largely caused by the fact that Hunter Jr. had inherited a part of the business from his father and not because of conflicting views regarding William Goddard's efforts to establish a post office in competition with the British. Both newspapers reprinted the pro and con articles which were appearing in the northern press of those days. John Ross became Williamsburg's postmaster during the short life of the provisional American post and Purdie succeeded him later in 1775 by authority of the Continental Congress.

In the mean time the volume of mail which passed the Williamsburg post office inscreased steadily. Connections with the commercial centers in the north had been greatly improved and an occasional letter from the south reached the Virginia capital, either from or via Edenton or by sea via Norfolk. But the southern section of America's post-



L-5. London, December 12, 1770, Bishop marks 12/DE(CEMBER) and 13/DE(CEMBER), by packet to NEW/YORK, brown, 24 x 12, Bishop mark 28/FE(BRUARY), 1771, and WMSBURG, brown, 47 x 8, all on reverse. Ocean rate 1N, total 8 dwts. 16 gr. (Colonial Williamsburg).

al system remained a source of anxiety.

A letter from the Auditor General's office in London, dated December 12, 1770, and addressed to Richard Corbin, the Receiver General at Williamsburg, passed New York on February 28 on its way southward. In defiance of the prevailing regulations the Auditor's office sent off the letter without prepaying the ocean postage of one shilling, consequently the New York office rated it 8 dwts, 16 gr. Postmaster Dixon had to claim it from the addressee after having marked the back of the cover with his handstamp. Although no date of arrival has been recorded it is clear that in 1771 a letter from London to Williamsburg via New York took almost three months to be delivered. This piece of mail is depicted in figure L-5.

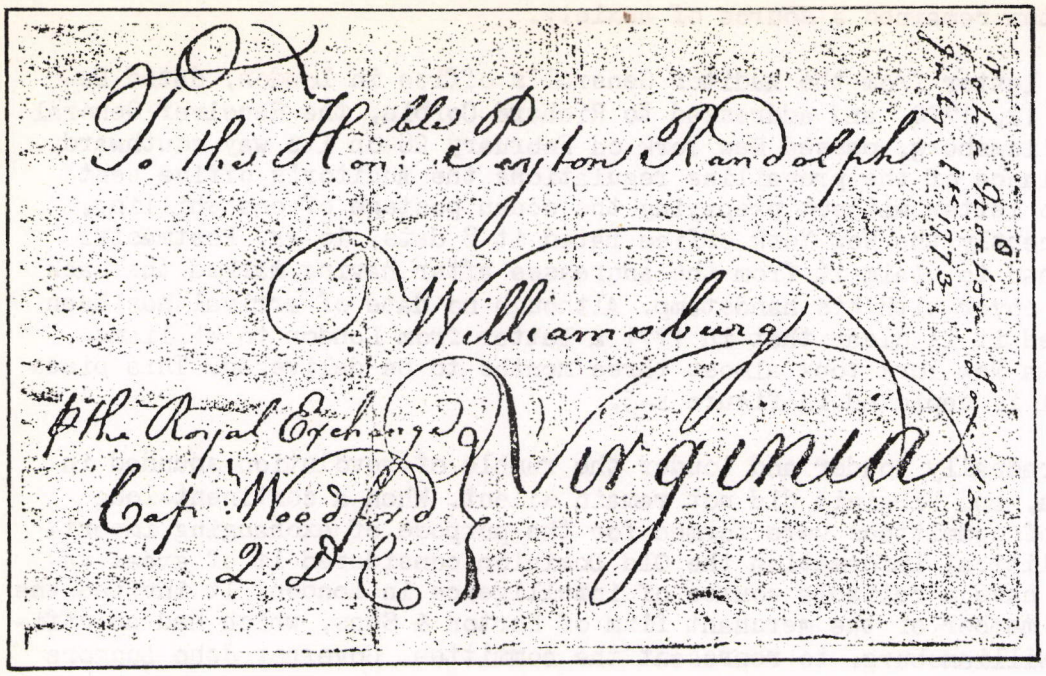
Gradually louder and louder the rumble of revolution sounded in America, and Virginia did not remain silent. When a continent-long chain of committees were formed for the purpose of exchanging important political information the Old Dominion considered it of great value to have a reliable source of intelligence in London. It invited the senior member of the merchant firm of Norton & Sons, which had an office in Williamsburg, to represent the committee. Governor John Dunmore promptly disapproved the decision and dissolved the Assembly.

John Norton, by his letter of July 6, 1773, responded favorably to the invitation and wrote that:

> "... like a faithful Watchman acquaint you herewith, Our present Parliament ... have made Strides towards Dispotism for some time past, with respect to the East India Company as well as America, that we have too much reason to dread bad consiquences from such prodeedings, some of my Friends in the India Direction tell me that they have thoughts of sending a Quantity of Tea to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Virginia & South Carolina, which Government seems to approve but they Suspect their motives are to make a Catspaw of the Company, & force them to establish the 3d. per lb. American Duty."

Ignoring the British postal rule to send all mail for Virginia destinations by the packet via New York, John Nort entrusted his reply (figure L-6) to Captain Woodford of the Royal Exchange, who delivered it promptly to the Chairman of the Committee of Correspondence in Williamsburg.

During the period that immediately preceded the Revolution postal America was in an uproar and Virginia did not remain unaffected. William Goddard had established a foothold for his "Constitutional Post" in Baltimore and Philadelphia and, after visiting tens of communities and conversed with their committees of correspondence in 1774, saw his plans for the rest of America reach an operative stage of impressive dimensions, particularly after the events in Lexington and Concord.



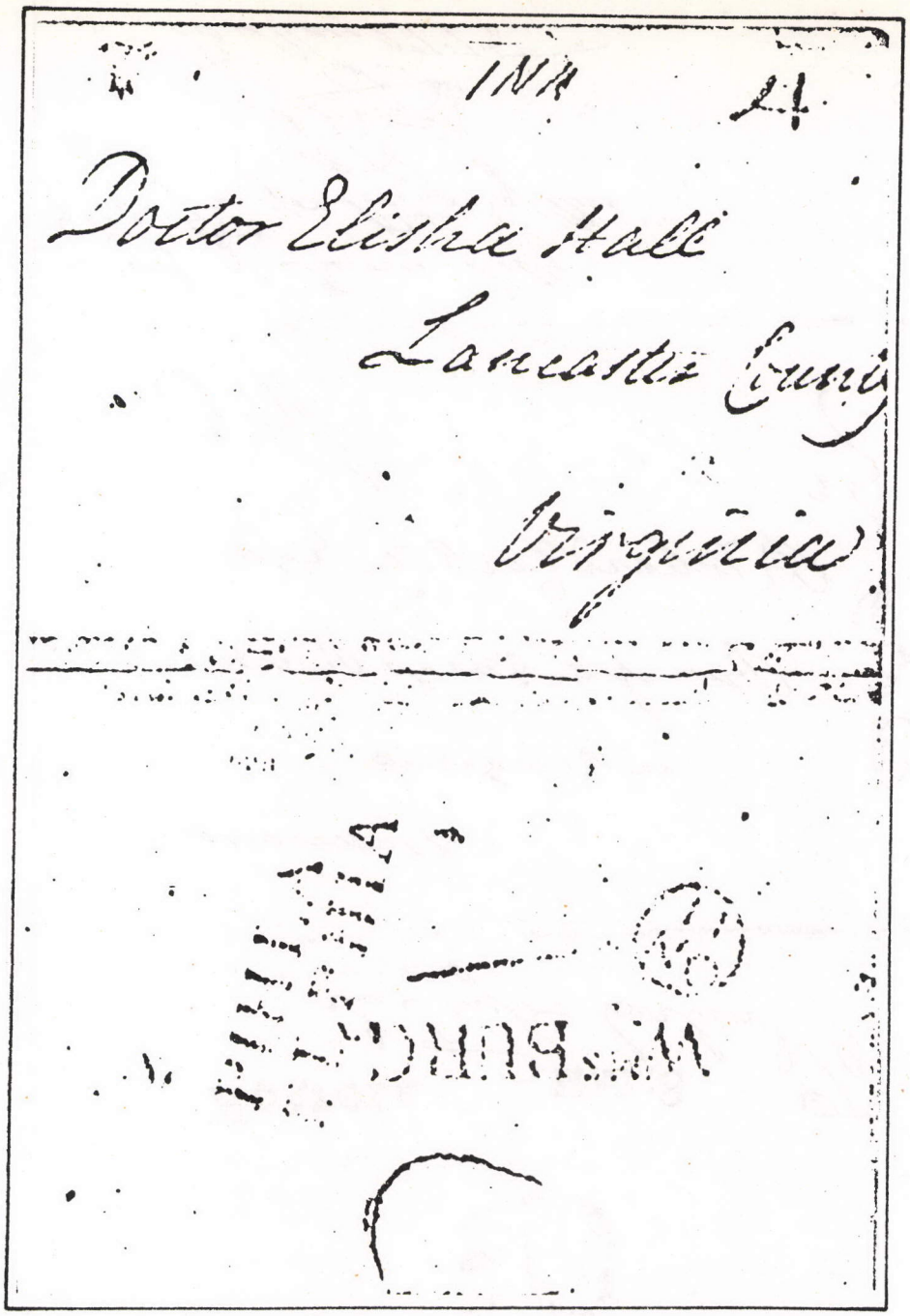
L-6. London, July 6, 1773 to Williamsburg by the private ship Royal Exchange. (Committee of Correspondence Papers, 1773-1775. Archives Division, Virginia State Library).

Few Virginia letters of this period, which is of particular interest to the postal historian, have been preserved. Two of these rarities are on display on the next pages.

The first of these (figure L-7) was written in Philadelphia on November 11, 1774, and arrived in Williamsburg for transmission to Lancaster County to the north of the Rappahannock River during a twilight interval. At that time Purdie had left his partner Dixon already and had established himself on what the rebuilders of the town have called Lot no. 20. In August William Goddard had visited Williamsburg and had met with the Committee of Correspondence and several other influential people, resulting in a very favorable reaction to his proposals. Purdie and Dixon in their Gazette of August 11, 1774 spoke of them in laudatory terms (1-5).

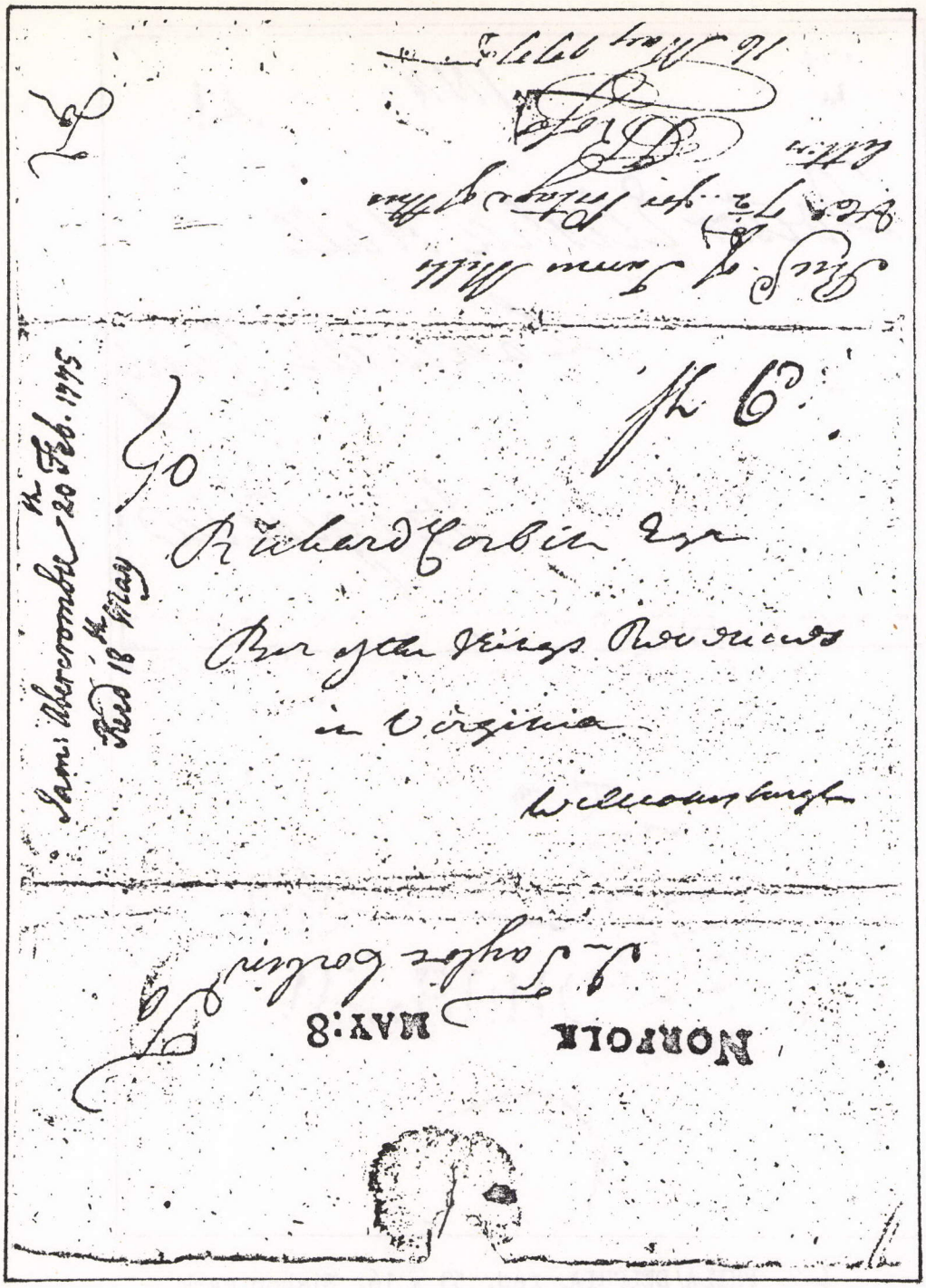
What actually happened to this letter is not clear. There is no mistake that the Philadelphia post office at that time was in the hands of Goddard's supporters. The rate of 1 shilling 4 pence for the 300-400 miles distance to Williamsburg confirms it. However, it is uncertain whether at the time the letter arrived in the Virginia capital Dixon was still its postmaster. The odds are in his favor. He was the public printer to the Virginia Colony and in that capacity printed the

(1-5) Ward L. Miner: William Goddard Newspaperman. Duke University Press,1962. p. 133.



L-7. PHILA/DELPHIA, red, 53 x 16, Bishop mark 11/NO(VEMBER), 1774, via WMSBURG, all on reverse, to Lancaster Co. Va. Philadelphia rated 1 sh. 4 d., Williamsburg rated 4 d. (Robert Siegel).

laws and acts passed by the General Assembly. Under those circumstances he may have shrank from openly breaking with the British establishment. The handstamp that was applied to the cover was the old familiar

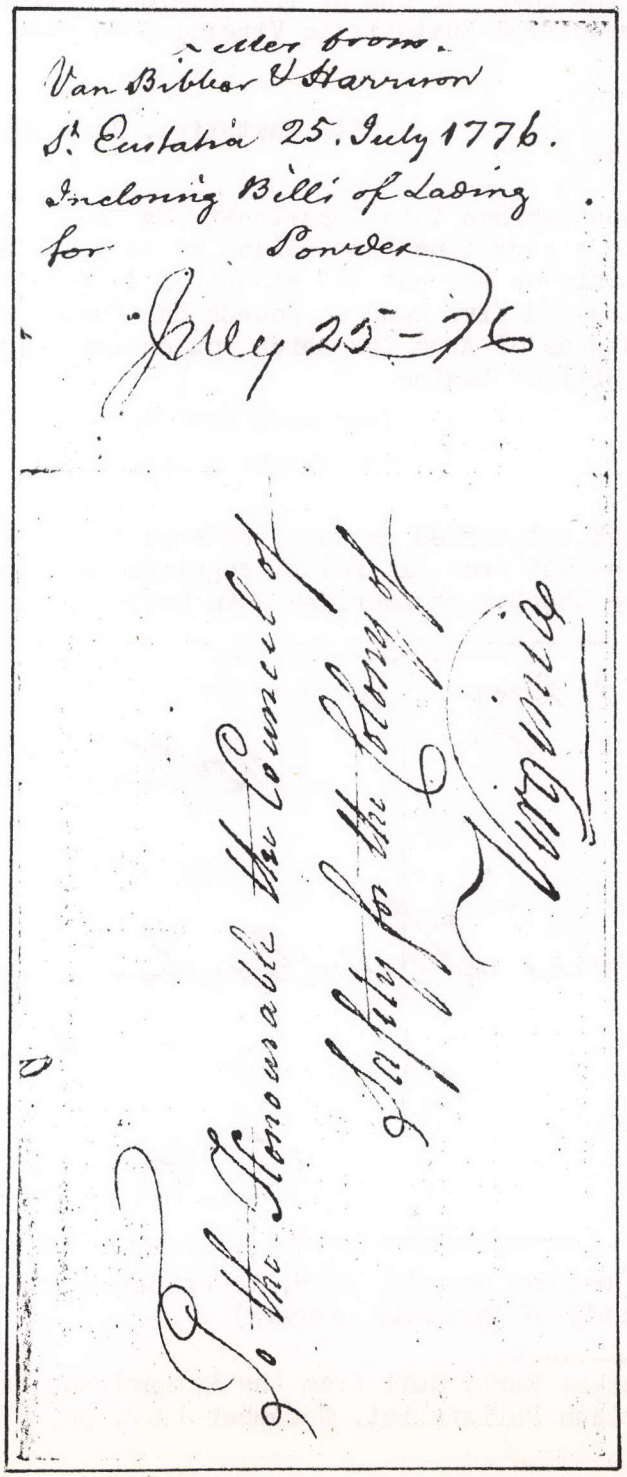


L-8. London, February 20, 1775, shipletter to Williamsburg, May 16, via NORFOLK, black, 29 x 8, MAY:8, on reverse. Rated 6d. (4d. postage + 2d. shipletter rate), local currency 7½ d. Constitutional Post. (Colonial Williamsburg).

one and it is inconceivable that he would have turned it over to anyone else. The rate applied to the letter for the distance Williamsburg-Lancaster is probably the old one of 4 pence charged for a voyage from

one American port to another.

The letter of figure L-8, written in London and addressed to Williamsburg, was processed via the port and post office of Norfolk during the few months that the American provisional post was operating in Virginia. The endorsement on the cover's reverse reveals that the Williamsburg postmaster was J. Ross. His term of office was short, because Alexander Purdie succeeded him in the fall of the same year when Benjamin Franklin as Postmaster General of the united colonies announced the postmasterships of the new administration.



L-9. St. Eustatia, Dutch West Indies, July 25, 1776 by private ship to Williamsburg. (Virginia State Library).

Forseeing a clash of arms in the near future the Committee of Safety in Williamsburg had taken steps to enlarge the colony's supply of gun powder and arms in order to be prepared. Like other colonies it had established for this purpose contact with agents in the Dutch West Indies island of St. Eustatius (Eustatia), who were able to furnish America in revolt with war material shipped from Europe. The story of this trade has been more extensively described from the postal history point of view in the American Philatelist (1-6). Similar negotiations were in progress with merchants in the French island of Martinique.

Figure L-9 shows the cover of one of the numerous letters which accompanied such a shipment from Eustatia to Virginia. In part the letter read:

"St. Eustatius, July 25, 1776.

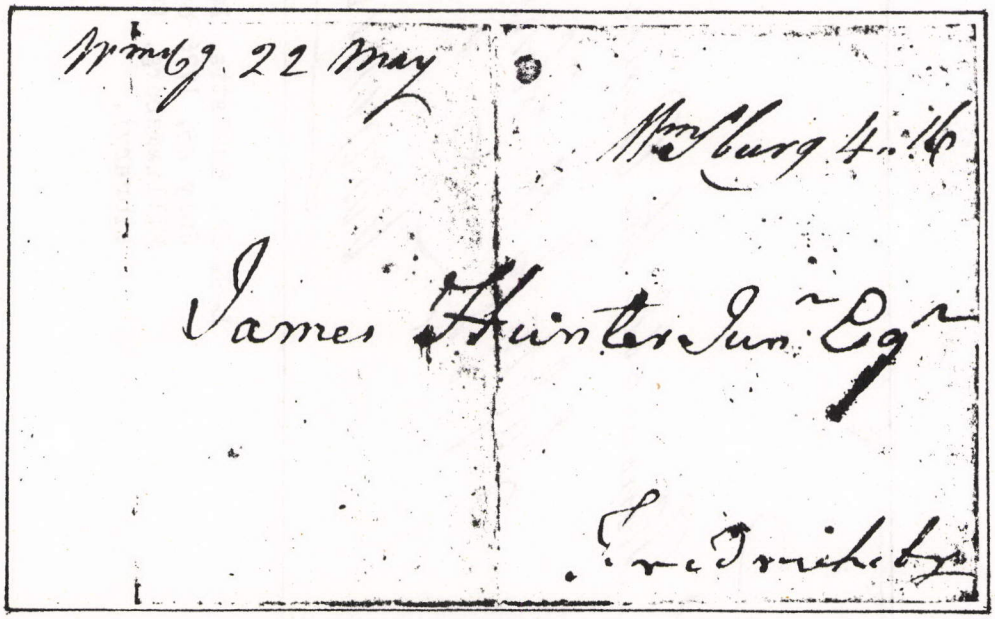
Gentlemen:

... We now embrace this Opportunity by Capt. John Pastun in a very fine Boat belonging to your Colony to Ship on account and Risque of said Colony seven thousand five hundred pounds Gun Powder and ninety Stands of Arms for which you enclos'd Invoice & Bill of Lading.....

Your most Hum. Serv.

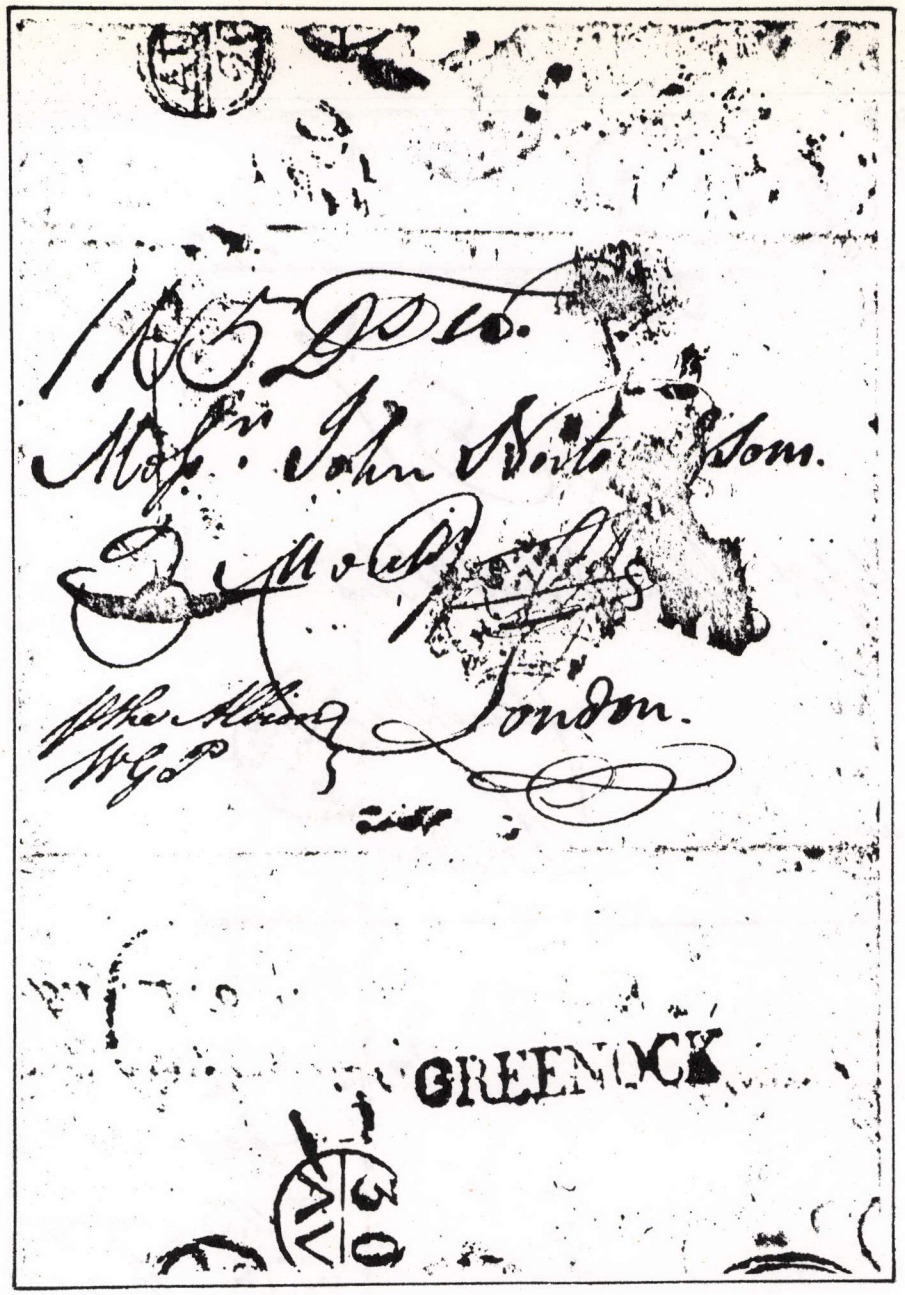
Van Bibben & Harrison."

This letter, though not marked as such, belongs to the kind of correspondence which was exempt from all postal regulations, including the payment of postage (See Chapter on American Ship Letters).



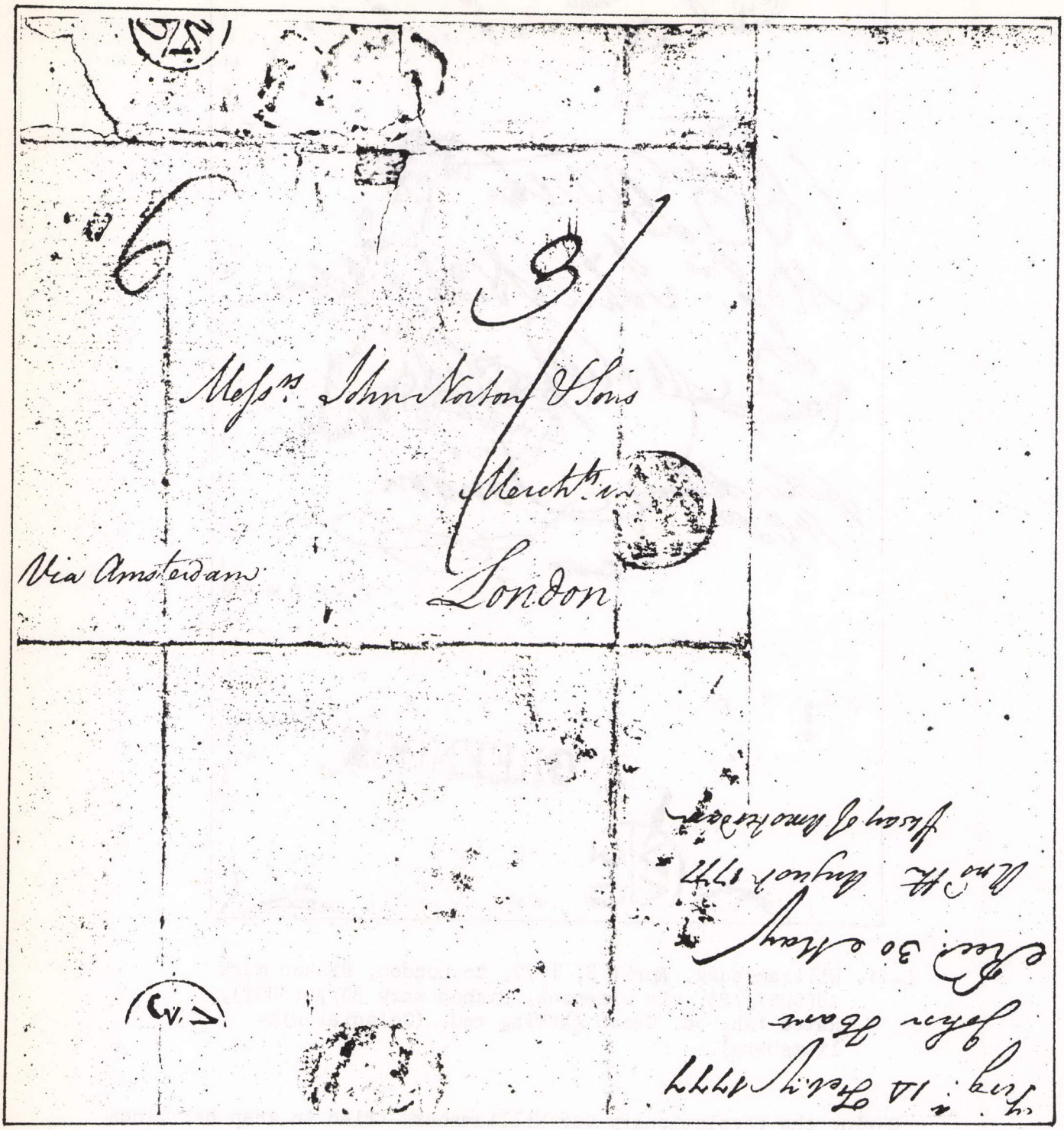
L-10. W(illia)msburg. May 22, 1778, to Fredericksburg. (University of Virginia Library).

(1-6) Alex. L. ter Braake: Early Mail from the Netherlands West Indies. The American Philatelist, November 1972. pp. 973-92.



L-11. Williamsburg, April 8, 1777, to London, Bishop mark AU(GUST)/23, via Greenock, Bishop mark 30/AU(GUST). Rated 1sh. 5d. Crown marking red. (Colonial Williamsburg).

During the revolutionary war Williamsburg tried to keep her lines of communications open in spite of many obstacles. The postal route to Fredericksburg, where the Army's purchasing office under James Hunter was located, was of great importance (figure L-10). Mail to Europe was subject to many hazards, but occasional letters succeeded in reaching their destination either via the West Indies, Holland or Scotland.



L-12. Williamsburg, February 14, 1777, via Netherlands West Indies, G.W.C. (Geoctrooieerde West India Company) 6 ST(uiver) postage due marking, and Amsterdam to London, Bishop mark MA(Y)/30. (Colonial Williamsburg).

It is surprising that as late as 1777, and maybe even later, when the armed conflict had developed into a full-grown war, some Scotch ports and post offices remained open for letters from America in revolt. The cover of figure L-11, which originated in Williamsburg, proves that the mail came through. It is true that it took this letter almost five months to reach its London destination, consequently the value of this kind of correspondence for commercial transactions was very problematic, but for many reasons the continuation of the postal contact with the home country was a definite plus-factor during those troubled years.

The summary of the Virginia 1777 happenings which a historian in her book on the correspondence of one of Williamsburg's most prominenet business houses wrote lists the following items:

> "Much tobacco is still being exported to Europe and the West Indies, thereby maintaining Virginia's credit in neutral countries. Therefore the British burn all warehouses within their reach. Supplies for the Continental Army must be imported. Virginia's safe harbors and placid rivers become busy shipyards as the State builds a navy to protect her traders.... Messrs. Norton and Beall of Williamsburg import 200 barrels of gunpowder for the Commonwealth." (1-7)

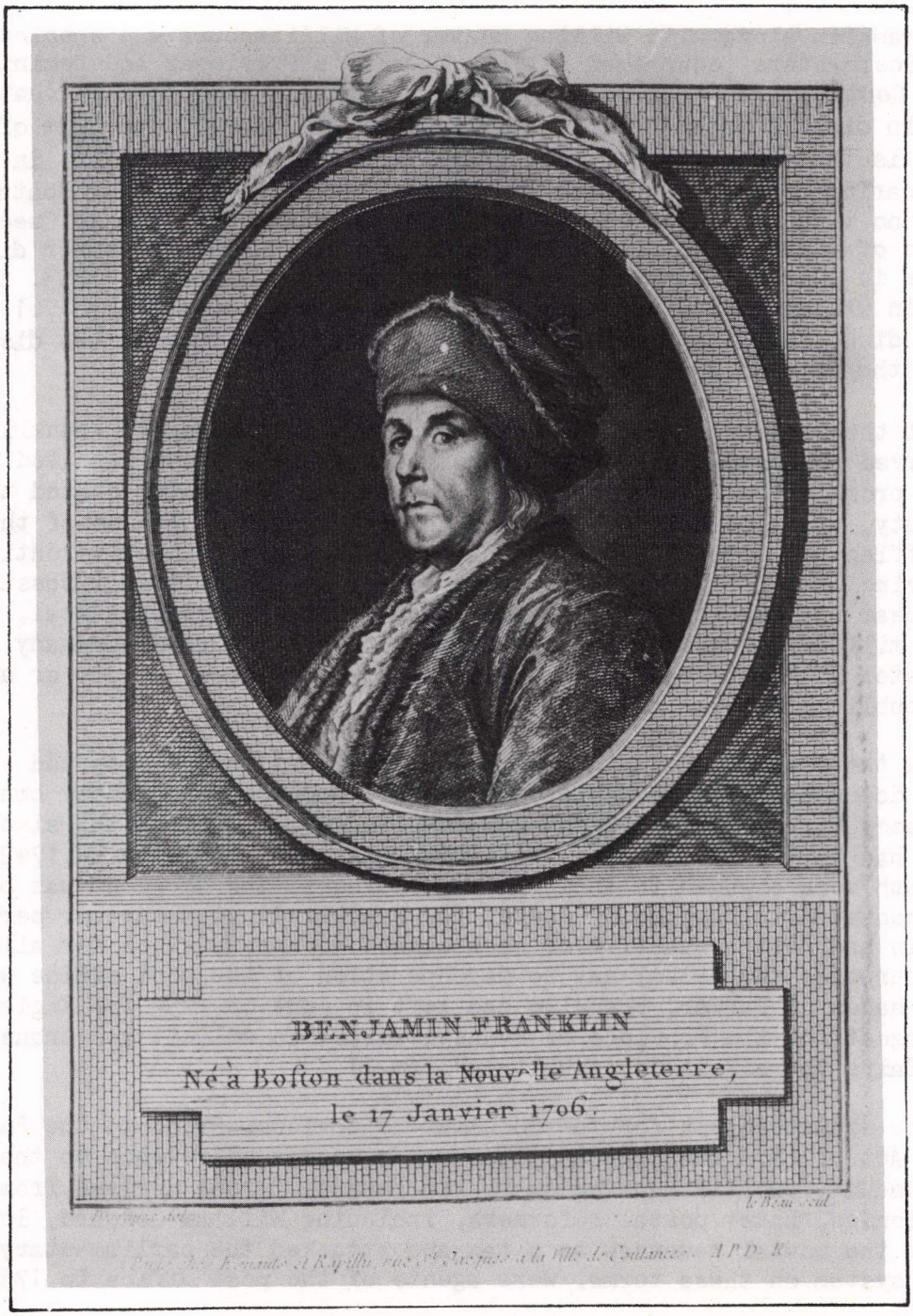
Another Williamsburg letter to London of the same vintage is depicted in figure L-12. It carries the circular G.W.C. postage due marking of the Dutch West India Company, which indicates that this piece of mail found its way to Europe via the island of St. Eustatius (Statia). The Amsterdam post office forwarded the letter to London, where the accumulated postage appeared to have amounted to 3 shillings.

Williamsburg's wartime postal channel to England via the Dutch West Indies and Holland was completely disorganized when in the spring of 1781 Admiral George Rodney occupied St. Eustatius and took harsh measures to prevent ney further Dutch support to the American war effort in whatever form via the small island.

(1-7) Francis Norton Mason: John Norton & Sons, Merchants of London and Virginia (Richmond, 1937), p. 399.

M. Postally, Benjamin Franklin

Alvin R. Kantor



Ambassador Benjamin Franklin, by Pierre Adrien Le Beau, after a drawing by Claude Louis Desrais.

The talents and achievements of Benjamin Franklin are endless. As of 1974 "The Papers of Benjamin Franklin", sponsored by Yale University and the American Philosophical Sociey, of which Franklin was the founder, have volume eighteen in preparation. The student of Franklin will therefore have some appreciation of the voluminous writings of our first Postmaster General. Yet as the years pass more can be added to the post office story of the "First American".

Franklin along with William Hunter of Williamsburg was appointed Joint Postmasters General of all his Majesty's Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of North America in 1753. Most legends have it that Franklin did not seek the office of Postmaster General. The fact of the matter is that Franklin did seek the office. Two years earlier, in 1751, upon hearing of his predecessor's, Elliot Benger's, impending death, he wasted no time in writing to Peter Collinson beseaching him to "secure success of this application". To Franklin's disconcertion Benger did not die in 1751 as Franklin had expected but lived on until 1753. Then Franklin was appointed together with Hunter, who served until 1761 when he too died. Franklin remained in office until 1774 when he was dismissed by the British parliament.

At the time he issued the document shown in figure M-1 Franklin had served as Postmaster General for five years. In it he repeated an advice promulgated by a royal letter of May 24, 1745 which stated that no deputy, agent of officer employed in His Majesty's Revenue of the Post Office was to be "impeded or hampered in their respective duties" by serving on a jury or inquest or to appear at any office or session or to bear any public office or employment, either ecclesiastical, civil or military. The document certifies that Mr. Woodward Abrahamy, postmaster of Marblehead, is so excused from serving on a jury or any other public office.

On the 10th of April in 1758 Franklin filled in the date and signed the document. William Hunter's signature appears immediately beneath his. James Parker, acting Agent and Comptroller, witnessed the signing. Parker had been a silent partner of Franklin since February 20,1742 when both were engaged in the printing business. The document was probably conveyed to England by packet for Franklin's signature or perhaps Franklin had left a quantity of such signed documents since for all intense purposes the actual day to day operation of the post office was in the hands of Parker. Franklin had left in June of 1757 for England as an agent for the Province of Pennsylvania. "To solicit and transact the affairs thereof in Great Britain". (m-1)

The stated reason for the document is obvious. Prior to the Post Office Act of 1765 the postal system was a source of revenue to the crown and any profits were added to the general income derived from the colonies. Later postal reformers, including William Goddard, looked upon the postal revenues as a tax and attacked the parliamentary postal system on these terms. Were agents of the post office in 1758

(m-1) Votes & Proceedings of the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, IV 6383.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, and WILLIAM HUNTER, Eſqrs. joint Poſt-Maſters-General of all his Majeſty's Provinces and Dominions on the Continent of *North-America*.

To all Governors, Mayors of Corporations, Juſtices of the Peace; and to all other his Majeſty's Officers and Miniſters, Eccleſiaſtical, Civil, or Military, within the ſaid Provinces and Dominions, Greeting.

WHEREAS His Majeſty, by His Royal Letters Patents under the Great Seal of *Great-Britain*, bearing Date the 24th Day of *May*, 1745, and in the Eighteenth Year of His Majeſty's Reign; to the End the Deputies, Agents, and other Officers, employed in the Service of His Majeſty's Revenue of the Poſt-Office might not be impeded or hindered in their reſpective Duties, was thereby pleaſed to declare His Royal Will and Pleaſure, That no ſuch Deputies, Agents, and other Officers, ſhall be compell'd or compellable to ſerve on any Jury or Inqueſt, or to appear or ſerve at any Aſſize or Seſſion, or to bear any public Office or Employment, either Eccleſiaſtical, Civil, or Military.

These are to Certify, That the Bearer hereof Mr. Woodward Abraham Gent. is Post Master at Marblehead which Employment requires at all Times his Perſonal Attendance, and that His Majeſty's Revenue in the Poſt-Office (great Part of which is now ſubjected to the Payment of the public Debts), may ſuffer very much by his being obliged to ſerve in the Train'd-Bands, or any other public Office, Eccleſiaſtical, Civil, or Military: For Notification whereof, We have Signed and cauſed the Seal of our Office to be hereunto affixed, this Tenth Day of April in the Thirty First Year of His Majeſtys Reign. 1758

B. Franklin

By the Post-Master General's Command

James Parker
Agent and Comptroller
(pro Tempore.)

Wm. Hunter

Figure M-1

to serve on juries the revenues from this source would be smaller and moreover would contribute to a default in service.

A second, and perhaps not obvious, reason may have been the King's method of placing limitations on the jury system in the colonies. The system was widely used in criminal and civil cases throughout the American colonial period and was respected by the colonists for its service in impeding the influence of unpopular British law. One of the wrongs voiced in 1776 was the interference with the jury system. More often than not a defendant would be acquitted by his peers if there appeared a conflict between that individual and the British courts. The early British jury system was such that English judges went to extreme lengths to coerce unanimity and had even established that the jury must go without food while deliberating. No wonder that the purpose of justice was not always served. In a period when the freedom and worth of a man was the shibboleth of the day the jury system further pointed out the inequalities of the rights of the common man.

Postmasters and riders, because of the traditional non-confidentiality of the mails had access to information that could be damaging to either one of the two sides in a legal action. Jurymen in the colonial years were called as witnesses because they had knowledge of the facts, facts that could be culled by going through the mail they carried daily. Just the opposite is true today. Any juryman who has knowledge of the facts other than as presented in a trial is excused from service.

On April 13, 1765 Thomas Pownall in England had occasion to write to John Hancock, a Boston merchant. The contents of the letter concerns itself with a debt which Pownall owed Hancocks's uncle Thomas. More interesting, aside from being a letter from one well known person to another is Franklin's use of the free frank. The frank obviously was applied as a favor since Franklin had no legitimate reason for wriing to Hancock nor was the correspondence of an official nature. The envelope was in direct violation of the Act of the Ninth, Queen Anne. Just prior to the new postal act of October 10, 1765 such abuses of the franking privilege were rampant and Franklin's use here was no exception. While he as joint Postmaster General along with John Foxcroft, who had been appointed in October 1761, replacing Hunter, was entitled to frank his mail, this did not extend to franking for others (m-2).

Thomas Pownall (1722-1805) first met Benjamin Franklin at the Albany Congress in 1754. Two years later he was appointed colonial governor of Massachusetts succeeding Shirley. In 1760 Pownall returned to England and was a firm and consistant friend of the colonists. He was one of the few who believed that Americans had the same rights as Englishmen. His knowledge of the colonies was put to good use in the parliament and he was considered an authority on North and South America, espousing the American cause where he could. In 1764 he published the "Colonial Constitution" which was the first comprehensive argument for

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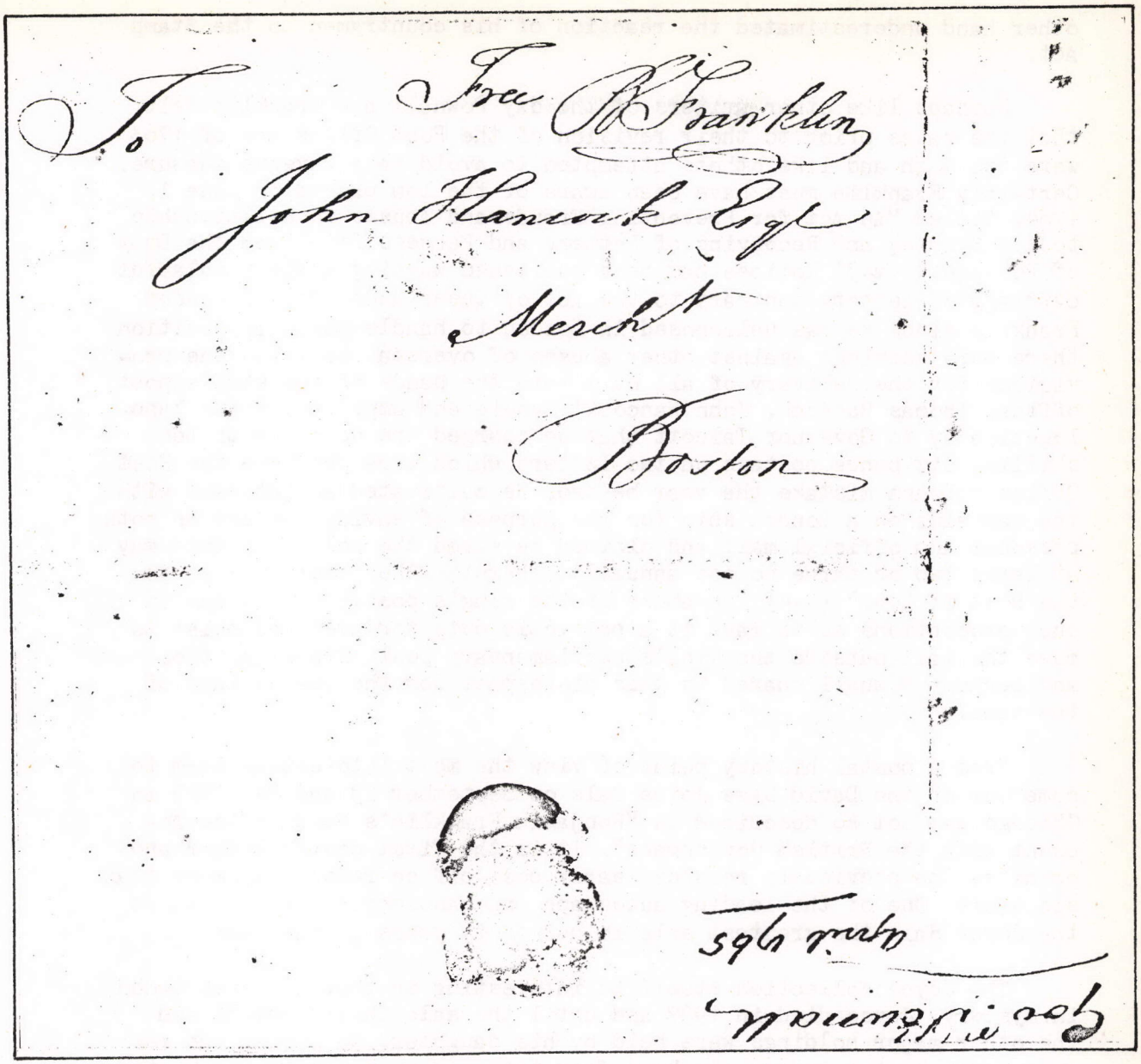
(m-2) See Chapter on Postage Rates. pp. D-34 through D-45.



M-2. London, April 13, 1765, to Boston. Free B Franklin. (From the author's collection).

the equal political status of the colonists in America. His political thinking was akin to Franklin's on this subject. They came to know each other not only because of their political views but also for the fact that Pownall and Franklin were both interested in science.

In February, just two months before this letter was written, Franklin had appeared in the Grenville hearings on the Stamp Act and on March 22, 1765, just three weeks prior to the letter, the act became law. Pownall could see the dire effects of the law; Franklin on the

other hand underestimated the reaction of his countrymen to the Stamp Act.

Perhaps like other writers of the day Pownall and Franklin felt that the rates prior to their revision of the Post Office Act of 1765 were too high and like others attempted to avoid this revenue measure. Certainly Franklin must have been aware of the law passed on June 1, 1764, titled "An Act for Preventing Frauds and Abuses in Relationship to the Sending and Receiving of Letters and Packets free From the Duty of Postage." (m-3) Notices had been published warning against unlawful carriage of letters contrary to the Act of Queen Anne. This included Franklin since he was unlicensed in London to handle mail. In addition there were warnings against other abuses of overseas mail and the provisions for the delivery of all mail into the hands of the king's post office. Thomas Hancock, John Hancock's uncle and employer, wrote "apologetically to Governor Talcott that he charged the colony with ten shilling six pence postage on two letters which were put into the Post Office through mistake the year before. He cultivated an interest with the captains on a London ship for the purpose of saving postage on both personal and official mail and claimed he saved the colony in this way at least two or three pounds annually otherwise they would all go to the Post Office." (m-4) The abuse of the king's postal system was in such proportions as to make it a patriotic duty for every colonist to move the mail outside the king's parliamentary post. Franklin, too, and perhaps Pownall shared in this disrespect for the postal laws of the time.

From a postal history point of view the most interesting item to come out of the David Gage Joice Sale on September 23 and 24, 1973 in Chicago was Lot #6 described as "Benjamin Franklin's Post Office Account with the British Government". It is the first postal ledger and predates the previously recorded early post office records by more than six years. One of the leading autograph and manuscript dealers called the Joyce Sale the greatest sale in her forty years in business.

The Joyce collection itself is interesting in that it is shrowded in mystery. Joyce died in 1937 and until the sale this document and the other major holdings were held by his daughter. No dealer can recall Joyce having made a purchase from them and no records were kept by Joyce either. This same mystery might have been the fate of the Franklin document except for a paragraph written in 1900 by William Loring Andrews, the renowned book collector and dealer in his book "Gossip About Book Collecting, Vol.I." He wrote:

> "The only memento of the Allen Library which I retain from among the few articles I purchased at the sale (John Allan Sale in 1864 sold by Joseph Sabine, Lot # 3359) is Benjamin Franklin's Post Office Account with the British Government in his (Franklin's) own remarkably neat chirography, for which interesting

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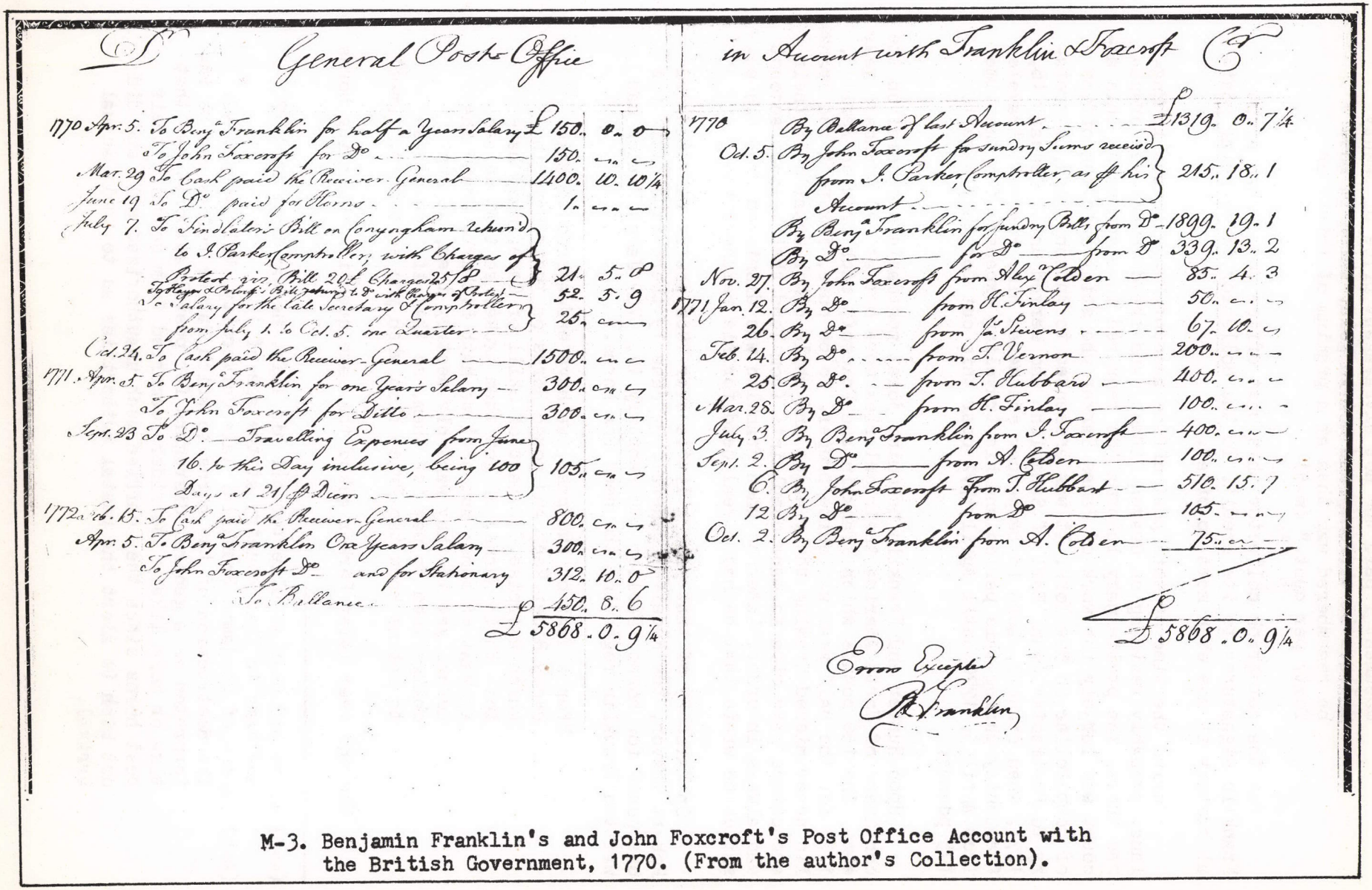
(m-3) Statutes at Large XII, p. 261, London Chronicle XV, p. 379. Collection Connecticut Historical Society, p. 283, Fitch Papers.

(m-4) Connecticut Historical Society, V. p. 272.,



Dr General Post-Office in Account with Franklin & Foxcroft C^r

1770 Apr. 5.	To Benj^a Franklin for half a Years Salary	£ 150.	0.	0	
	To John Foxcroft for D^o	150.	—	—	
Mar. 29	To Cash paid the Receiver General	1400.	10.	10¼	
June 19	To D^o paid for Horns	1.	—	—	
July 7.	To Findlater's Bill on Conyngham return'd to J. Parker, Comptroller, with Charges of Protest viz. Bill 20£ Charges 25/8	21.	5.	8	
	To Hayes & Polock's Bill return'd to D^o with Charges of Protest	52.	5.	9	
	To Salary for the late Secretary & Comptroller from July 1. to Oct. 5. one Quarter	25.	—	—	
Oct. 24.	To Cash paid the Receiver-General	1500.	—	—	
1771. Apr. 5.	To Benj^a Franklin for one Year's Salary	300.	—	—	
	To John Foxcroft for Ditto	300.	—	—	
Sept. 23	To D^o Travelling Expences from June 16. to this Day inclusive, being 100 Days at 21/ ⅌ Diem	105.	—	—	
1772 Feb. 15.	To Cash paid the Receiver-General	800.	—	—	
Apr. 5.	To Benj^a Franklin One Years Salary	300.	—	—	
	To John Foxcroft D^o and for Stationary	312.	10.	0	
	To Ballance	450.	8.	6	
		£ 5868.	0.	9¼	

1770	By Ballance of last Account	£ 1319.	0.	7¼
Oct. 5.	By John Foxcroft for sundry Sums receiv'd from J. Parker, Comptroller, as ⅌ his Account	215.	18.	1
	By Benj^a Franklin for sundry Bills from D^o	1899.	19.	1
	By D^o for D^o from D^o	339.	13.	2
Nov. 27.	By John Foxcroft from Alex^r Colden	85.	4.	3
1771 Jan. 12.	By D^o from H. Finlay	50.	—	—
26.	By D^o from Ja^s Stevens	67.	10.	—
Feb. 14.	By D^o from T. Vernon	200.	—	—
25.	By D^o from T. Hubbard	400.	—	—
Mar. 28.	By D^o from H. Finlay	100.	—	—
July 3.	By Benj^a Franklin from J. Foxcroft	400.	—	—
Sept. 2.	By D^o from A. Colden	100.	—	—
6.	By John Foxcroft from T. Hubbart	510.	15.	7
12	By D^o from D^o	105.	—	—
Oct. 2.	By Benj^a Franklin from A. Colden	75.	—	—
		£ 5868.	0.	9¼

Errors Excepted

B. Franklin

M-3. Benjamin Franklin's and John Foxcroft's Post Office Account with the British Government, 1770. (From the author's Collection).

> document I paid the not extravagant price of twenty dollars in currency and not in gold, which it must be remembered was then at a premium of thirty or forty per cent." (m-5)

For the autograph collector this post office record has eight Franklin signatures to its credit. To the collector of colonial postal history it has even more to offer.

During the time of this post office account Franklin was in England, probably residing on Craven Street, and the document was prepared there. The preliminary information required in compounding this account was largely the work of James Parker who still held the office of Comptroller in New York. It was presented to Anthony Todd, secretary to Postmaster John, Earl of Sandwich, who served until January 16, 1771, when Francis, Lord Le Despencer succeeded him. Foxcroft traveled frequently during this period and his traveling expenses for the time from April 5, 1770 until April 1772 bear this out for they came to 105 pounds.

Upon Hunter and Franklin becoming joint postmasters general on the continent of North America their salaries were set at 300 pounds a year each. The 150 pounds which Franklin and Foxcroft each drew on April 5, 1770 for the half year was quite proper. To be sure, Foxcroft and Franklin never missed drawing their wages and while other details of their accounting gave rise to many complaints from Todd their salary account was always in order. Later on when Franklin was dismissed from his position he wrote that he had a real need for his remuneration.

On March 29 of that year a little over 1400 pounds was tendered Robert Trevor, the Receiver General. On June 19 there is a debit for one pound for horns. Earlier, on February 17, 1769 James Parker had written Franklin regarding the need for horns.

> "For a Year or two past, we have endeavored to make every Rider keep and sound Horns on their Way; in which Exercise for want of Skill or Care, many have lost their Horns, or got them broke, so that we are in Want of some; and tho' we hath hitherto found the Horns, yet if they wantonly destroy them, we must oblige them to pay for them, so that if you please to let me know the Price also when you send them." (m-6)

Now one year later Parker asked the same question regarding horns

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(m-5) Allen had been a collector all his life. He was born in 1777 and came to this country at the age of 12.

(m-6) Papers of Benjamin Franklin. Yale University, Vol. 16, p. 42. The destruction of the horns to which Parker refers can be interpreted as a general disregard for postal authority at that time or more likely the riders demurred from sounding their post horns since they carried much unauthorized mail and did not wish to alert the postal authorities as to their actual arrival.

and Franklin charged the post office one pound for the horns he bought. The post office, however, disclaimed responsibility and insisted that the riders must pay for their own horns (m-7).

On July 7 Findlator's (Alexander Findleter of Jamaica) Bill on Conyngham for 20 pounds was a sixty day sight draft, dated June 20, 1769, drawn on William Cuninghame (William Cunningham, Conyngham) & Co. of Glasgow, a firm with extensive interests in the Virginia and Maryland tobacco trade and one of twenty-seven Scottish firms receiving tobacco from the area. With this draft Thomas Vernon, the postmaster of Newport, R.I. had attempted to settle his postal account (m-8). This bill too was later protested (m-9).

By the same letter of February 2, 1770 in which Parker had written regarding the Findleter matter he also wrote of another draft for 50 pounds Sterling, 90 day sight draft made on January 9, 1770 in Newport, again by Vernon to settle a psotal account, drawn by Hays and Polock on David Milligan of London (m-10). The additional sum represents interest charges for the 90 day period or perhaps the difference in the rate of exchange.

On July 2, 1770 James Parker died "Of a nervous fever", according to Mrs. Parker (m-11). Mary Parker admits to "being an utter Stranger" to the records that her husband kept as comptroller of the post. Despite Parker's death only two days into the second quarter she was none the less paid his salary of twenty-five pounds as Comptroller and Land Waiter. With his death Parker took many of the details of the office to his grave and what he did not take John Foxcroft took, for within a few days Foxcroft removed the remaining account books. As a result of Foxcroft's removal of these records Franklin was never able to bring his account with Anthony Todd to a satisfactory conclusion. Much in the way of correspondence regarding this account was to ensue; first with Franklin, and when Franklin was dismissed as postmaster general on January 31, 1774 the same effort to clarify the accounts was carried on between Finlay, Franklin's successor, and Foxcroft who retained the position.

On October 24, 1770 Franklin sent Trevor, the Receiver General, 1500 pounds. The records of the General Post Office state that this had been received January 5, 1771 (m-12). Franklin's remittance of 800 pounds on February 15, 1772 was received and noted in England on April 5, 1772 (m-13).

On April 5, 1771 and again on April 5, 1772, exactly one year after receiving their previous year's salaries, both Franklin and Foxcroft drew their 300 pounds each, with Foxcroft adding 12 pounds for "Stationary" (sic). On June 16th Foxcroft left on a business trip to visit the

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(m-7) "Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Yale University." Vol. 17. p. 130.
(m-8) Ibid, p. 55.
(m-9) Ibid, p. 55, footnote.
(m-10) Ibid. p. 55. Baruch Hays and Issachar Polock were partners in a New York and Newport mercantile firm. Baruch Hays became a loyalist during the war while Polock was a merchant in southern illinois around Kahokia.
(m-11) ALS. American Philosophical Society, letter from Mary Parker to Benjamin Franklin.
(m-12) American Letter Book, 1773-1783, British General Post Office Archives.
(m-13) Ibid.

southern post offices and returned one hundred days later on September 23. His traveling expenses were calculated at a guinea a day.

The last item on the debet or left side "to balance" 450 pounds, 8 shillings, 6 pence represents the profits for the period to April 5, 1772. This compares with a profit of 1319. 0. $7\frac{1}{4}$ for 1770 and a profit of 1819 pounds in 1769 (m-14). This profit should be judged in the light of the political turmoil of the time. The colonists of 1772 were not the same law abiding citizens that they were in 1769. By this time more and more mail was being exchanged at coffee houses instead of entering the royal mail system. Even more mail was being carried by private posts and by March 1774, less than two years later, there was a colonial post founded by William Goddard operating in direct competition with the British post office.

On the credit side of the ledger Franklin reported the profit from the period ending April 5, 1770. On October 5th Foxcroft had reported receipt of funds from J. Parker, deceased as of July 2nd of the same year. He had taken no chances that Mary Parker might misapply the office funds of her husband and within a few days after his death had called on Mrs. Parker seeking an accounting of Parker's postal receipts. The records show that Foxcroft received 203 pounds, 12 shilling, 2 pence (m-15). The discrepancy of 14. 5. 11. can be explained perhaps by the rate of exchange. Franklin always quoting in British sterling and Mrs. Parker reporting in New York pounds (m-16).

On the same date Franklin recorded two sizeable sums as having been received from Parker. This disproportionate figure on Parker's account as compared to the size of the other postmasters' receipts, which followed, is doubtless due to the fact that Parker, residing in New York, was the central collection point for other post offices in the city's vicinity.

The next six entries were the receipts from five reporting post masters:

Alexander Colden	New York
Hugh Finlay	Quebec
J. (James) Stevens	Halifax, Nova Scotia
T. (Thomas) Vernon	Newport
T. (Tuthill) Hubbart	Boston (stepson of Franklin's brother, John)

On July 3rd Foxcroft, now replacing Parker in New York, tendered

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(m-14) A.H.Smyth: Life of Franklin (New York, 1905-1907), Vol. X, p.175.

(m-15) ALS American Philosophical Society. Mrs.Parker to B.Franklin.

(m-16) Rates of exchange varied from colony to colony. The rate in 1769 was most favorable in Pennsylvania and least favorable in New York. The first ranged from 169 to 167.5 to 100 pounds British Sterling, the latter between 180 pounds and 177.7. (Papers of Benjamin Franklin, Vol. 17. Yale University, p. 4, footnote).

Franklin four hundred pounds and in September of 1771 Colden remitted, and so did Hubbart. The last entry on October 2 was from Colden again and Franklin was now ready to submit the finished report and signed the document prophetically: "Errors Excepted, B.Franklin."

In looking over the accounting of the colonial post office one has to be impressed with the simplistic approach to such a large geographic area. Even the number of reporting local postmasters seems incompatible with the towns and villages that were known to exist. One would have to believe that there was a greater volume of business in those days than was reported. Two years later Goddard had little difficulty in establishing many post offices in what was to become the United States. Maybe very few had a profit to report.

Anthony Todd too felt that the report lacked depth and detail and with the presentation of this document by Franklin to the General Post Office there began a long series of correspondence and efforts on the part of Franklin to satisfy Todd. It ended only with Franklin's dismissal on January 31, 1774 and the two of them carried on a voluminous correspondence until that date. Much credit must be given the two men for continuing their negotiations in a gentlemanly manner when one keeps in mind the events that were going on in America and the heated deliberations regarding the colonies that were being carried on in the Houses of Parliament. The period of Franklin's Post Office account and the Todd-Franklin exchange of letters spans the same period of the Boston Massacre, Boston Tea Party, the Townsend Acts, the fiery orations of Samual Adams and Thomas Paine's "Common Sense".

Soon after Franklin submitted his postal report on October 7th, 1772 (m-17) Franklin wrote Foxcroft that Mr. Colden, who was the comptroller-secretary in New York at that time, had promised that the accounts would be on the next boat.

> "If they do not come I think we shall be blamed and he will be superceded. For their Lordships, our masters, are incensed at the long delay."

It is difficult to believe that Franklin would be intimidated but the salary of three hundred pounds paid to him by the postal authorities was an important and major source of his annual income. Again on November 3rd he writes Foxcroft:

> "... only the impatience for the accounts seems increasing. I hope they (the accounts) are in the October packet now soon expected agreeable to Mr. Colden's last promise."

On December 2, 1772 Franklin received the October packet mail and complained to Foxcroft that the receipts were all lumped together:

> "...without any state of the accounts of the several offices ... it is therefore rejected ... I can make

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(m-17) Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

> no settlement till you send it to me in the usual form, viz giving credit to G.P.O. for each separate sum received and of what office ... today Mr.Todd called me. By a letter Mr. Todd showed me ... from Mr. Colden, he seems sensible that the account rendered was imperfect; for he excuses himself by saying, that he had no precedent to show how the accounts has been heretofore stated, and that he therefore followed your direction ... which Mr. Todd wondered at. I beg therefore that you would immediately urge him to get them done and send them over in the manner mentioned." (m-18)

In the same letter Franklin is concerned whether Mrs. Franklin has received his salary of three hundred pounds.

On July 14, 1773, again to Foxcroft, Franklin refers to the

> "... post office accounts of April 1772 ... I observed I had full credit for my salary, but no charge appeared against me for money paid on account to Mrs. Franklin from the Philadelphia office. I suppose the thirty currency a month was regularly paid, because I had had no complaint from her for want of money, and I expected to find the charge in the account of last year, that is to April 5, 1773. But nothing of it appears there, pray, my Dear Friend, explain this to me." (m-19)

By December 9, 1774, nearly one year and a half later the account still had not been settled. Franklin had been dismissed as Postmaster General and in the next follow-up letter on the Franklin-Foxcroft Post Office Record the correspondence is between Anthony Todd and Foxcroft and Finlay. The latter now had replaced Franklin. Todd wrote Foxcroft

> "... Dr. Franklin and Accountant General have had a meeting in order to settle the General Accounts to the 3rd of April last but they made out in so loose and careless not to say incorrect manner."

In the American Letter Book of the General Post Office there appears a detail of the cash paid by Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft to Robert Trevor, eq., Receiver General of the Post Office for the period covered by this document:

"1771	£	s	d		
January 5	1500			-	Both amounts verify those shown in
1772					
April 5	800			-	document M-3.
1773					
Oct. 10	1000				
April 5	631	19	10		

(m-18) Ibid. (m-19) Ibid.

> Acknowledged by Dr. Franklin as Balance and ready to be paid when Mr. Foxcroft gives up vouchers to him with a Discharge.
>
> 973 0 5" (m-20)

Despite Mr. Todd's entreaties for detail and accuracy the General Post Office in London errored in this statement and should have dated the amount of 1000 pounds October 10, 1772 and not 1773.

In the same letter Mr. Todd provides Foxcroft and Finlay with an example of a correct account book, one that is much more detailed. These instructions were little used for the British Post Office in the colonies was soon to close out their operations.

On April 8, 1775 in a letter addressed to New York Mr. Todd advises Foxcroft that Dr. Franklin had left for Philadelphia some time ago (Franklin had left in March, 1775). In this last letter regarding the account Mr. Todd expressed no doubt that the two would be able to adjust it

> "... and I hope what has already been said about the confusion in so many accounts and the specimen which has been sent to you for one alone between yourselves as Deputy Postmaster General and this office renders it unnecessary to add more on the subject." (m-21)

Not much more is known of the events and even less as to whether or not Franklin's account ever fully satisfied Todd for by Christmas of 1775 the King's Post Office was closed permanently. Goddard's Post (m-22) had taken over the postal system of the colonies and by July of 1775 a committee of the Continental Congress brought in a plan for the establishment of a postal system for the new nation.

(m-20) American Letterbook, 1773-1783. General Post Office.
(m-21) Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.
(m-22) See Chapter H.

N. The Early Letter Post of Charlestown, S.C.

Alex.L.ter Braake and
Nicholas J. Johnson, M.D.

Since the founding in 1670 of Charlestown the city was destined to become the Carolinian postal focus from which lines of commercial, military and social communications radiated to outposts in the West Indies, to the British home country, and to other centers of activity on the American mainland, in the north and in the south.

The division of the Carolinas occurred in 1710, and soon there after both parts became crown colonies, Sout Carolina in 1721, its neighbor in 1731, at that time diverting from a Proprietary. In their infancy they served as valuable military and political outposts to deter French, Spanish and Indian infiltrations.

The oldest reference to a post office in Charlestown comes from a researcher who gave a talk some years ago in a meeting of Branch 215, National Association if Postal Supervisors to present "Some Random notes onEarly Postal Affairs to America's Most Historic City." In it Mr. Paul Mathewes mentioned several facts of interest about the handling of posted letters prior to the event of the Neale Patent (See Chapter K), events whichhave never been recorded in postal history literature. Unfortunately the death of this Project's valuable local co-worker interrupted the flow of important information which made it impossible to check the information's origin and prepare this manuscript in time for delivery to the printers. However, there is no reason to doubt the correctness of these early notes, because they very well tie in with subsequent postal events.

Here is a partial reproduction of Mr. Mathewes' remarks:

> "Charleston cannot boast of having the first Post Office in America. That honor goes to Boston, Mass., which established hers in November, 1639; but the fact remains that when the city was founded in 1670, at Albemarle Point on Ashley River, one of the first considerations given attention, after the building of the settlement and obtaining a minister of the Gospel, was the means of communication with the West Indies and the Mother country. Records of the times showed that the ships that left the young colony bore letters pleading for articles needed by the settlers, and also carried back glowing accounts telling of the beauties of the locality and its wonderful potential future. The small settlement at Albemarle Point soon proved insufficient for the needs of the newcomers and they began to fan out from the original settle-

> ment. By 1672 several farms had been developed on a peninsular of land called Oyster Point, and it became increasingly popular with the colonists. In 1760 Oyster Point was made the headquarters of the colony, and the old place, Albemarle Point, was abandoned. By this time the government of the colony was well organized with a Governor appointed by the Proprietors and a Council elected by the people to rule them. In 1684 an Act was passed creating the office of Postmaster to handle the people's mail. To be sure, he was not designated as such, for the Act specified that the Powder Receiver for the city, who collected a percantage of gunpowder from each ship that arrived, and was responsible for its safekeeping, should, in addition, receive and collect all letters of the people, and was entitled to a fee of three pence and three farthings for each piece handled. He was required to post all letters received for the period of 30 days in a room at his house. The first man appointed as one William Smith, who lived near the present location of Broad and Savage Streets."

The next oldest refgrence to a post office in Charlestown is recorded by Yates Snowden (n-1). He wrote:

> "Two unrelated events occurred during 1698, the second year of Blake's administration, which are worthy of recording -- the establishment of the first postoffice in South Carolina and the founding of the first library in the province ... The postoffice was at the house of Francis Fidling and was established for the convenience of shipmasters arriving in that port who were to deliver all their letters to him. Each master was also to make out a list of his mail which was to be posted in some public place in Mr. Fidling's house."

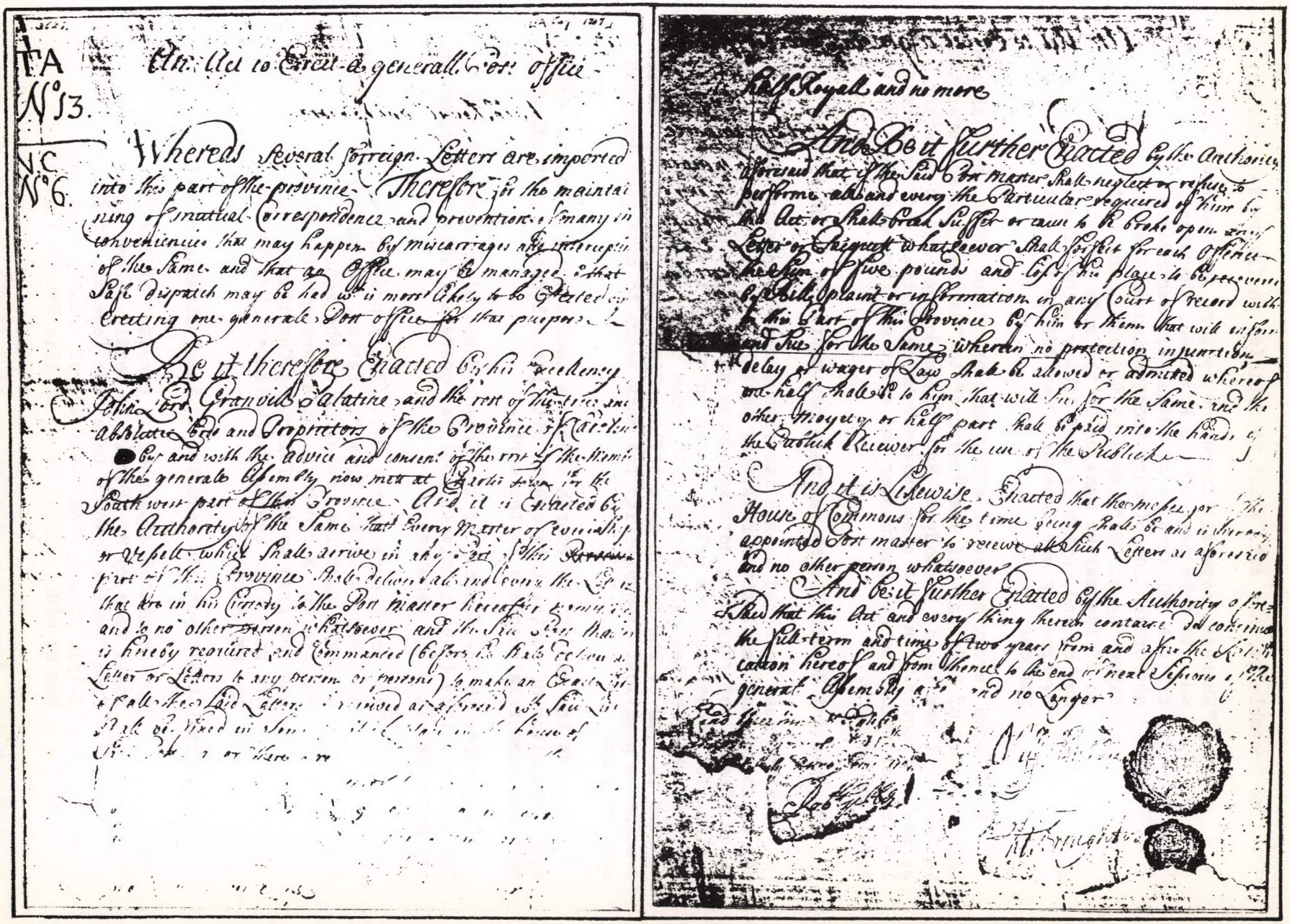
Apparently Snowden was not familiar with the existence of an earlier post office in Charlestown and the activities assigned to Mr. Smith.

The date of Snowden's report suggests a provincial action by the Carolina Assembly resulting from the proposals made by Andrew Hamilton who was America's first postmaster general (n-2). However, a perusal of the Assembly Journals indicates that no legal steps were taken for "Erecting a Generall Post Office" under the Neale Patent prior to September 15, 1703 (n-3).

(n-1) Yates Snowden: A History of South Carolina (Chicago, 1920), Vol. I, p. 131.

(n-2) See Chapter K.

(n-3) Mary E. Woolley in her "The Early History of the Colonial Post Office" (1894) on page 23, wrote: "Cooper's Statutes at Large of South Carolina records an enactment regarding the post, of September 16th, 1702, however, the proposed Bill became law one year later.



TA No 13.

N.C. No 6.

An Act to Erect a generall Post office

Whereas several forreign Letters are imported into this part of the province Therefore for the maintaining of mutual Correspondence and prevention of many inconveniencies that may happen by miscarriages and interception of the Same and that an Office may be managed that Safe dispatch may be had wh is most likely to be Erected by Erecting one generall Post office for that purpose

Be it therefore Enacted by his Excellency John Lord Granville Palatine and the rest of the true and absolute Lords and Proprietors of the Province of Carolina by and with the advice and consent of the rest of the Members of the generall Assembly now mett at Charles town for the South west part of this Province And it is Enacted by the Authority of the Same that every Master of every Ship or Vessell which shall arrive in any Port of this part of this Province shall deliver all and every the Letters that are in his Custody to the Post master hereafter nominated and to no other person whatsoever and the said Post master is hereby required and Commanded (before he shall deliver any Letter or Letters to any person or persons) to make an Exact List of all the said Letters received as aforesaid wh said List shall be fixed in some [illegible] place in the house of [illegible] or there [illegible]

half Royall and no more

And Be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that if the said Post master shall neglect or refuse to performe all and every the Particular required of him by this Act or shall break Suffer or cause to be broke open any Letter or Pacquett whatsoever shall forfeit for each Offence the sum of five pounds and loss of his place to be recovered by Bill plaint or information in any Court of record within this Part of this Province by him or them that will inform and sue for the Same wherein no protection injunction delay or wager of Law shall be allowed or admitted whereof one half shall be to him that will sue for the Same and the other moyety or half part shall be paid into the hands of the Publick Receiver for the use of the Publick

And it is Likewise Enacted that the messenger of the House of Commons for the time being shall be and is hereby appointed Post master to receive all such Letters as aforesaid and no other person whatsoever

And be it further Enacted by the Authority aforesaid that this Act and every thing therein contained do continue the full term and time of two years from and after the Ratification hereof and from thence to the end of next Sessions of the generall Assembly after and no Longer

Read thirty [illegible]

[illegible]

Jos [illegible]

[illegible]

N-1. September 15, 1703. Bill for Erecting a Generall Post Office, read ye Third Time which past into Law. (Journals of the Commons House of Assembly of South Carolina).

The Preamble to this Act, which is depicted in figure N-1, states:

> "Whereas, severall forreigne letters are imported into this part of the Province, therefore, for the maintenance of mutual correspondence, and prevention of many inconveniences that may happen by mis-carriages of the same, and that an office may be managed so the safe dispatch may be had, which is most likely to be effected by creating one Generall Post Office for that purpose: ..."

It ordered "every master of every ship or vessel which shall arrive into any port of this part of the Province" to "deliver all and every the letters that are in his custody to Mr. Edward Bourne; and to no other person whatsoever." The Act also provided house-delivery for unclaimed letters for which the new postmaster was entitled t "receive one half royal and no more."

By this Act Edward Bourne was made postmaster of "Charlestowne".

The law just referred to and its reenactments in later years did not establish any regulations regarding postal service within the province itself, nor regarding correspondence with the other American colonies. Yet occasionally a letter posted in one of the provinces in the north reached Charlestown. Figure C-16 shows one of these which was dispatched in 1720 by the Boston post office. Since overland transportation remained a practical impossibility for many years to come such mail was sent by ship.

Towards the end of the fourth decade a need developed for an official regulation of postal intercourse with its neighbors, particularly with the commercial centers in the north.

According to the Journal of the Common House of Assembly, dated February 27, 1739 (n-4) a private post was operating between Charlestown and North Carolina. It reported:

> "Mr. Commissary (John) Dart (Esq.) produced to the House a Letter from Mr. Farris, Postmaster of North Carolina, relating to the settling a Post to the Northern Colonies which being read was referred to the following Committee, viz. Mr. Dart, Mr. Lewis, Mr. Whitaker, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Morris."

This Committee's mandate resulted in the following report:

> "The Committee appointed to consider of the Proposal made by Mr. Farris to settle a Post Office From Charles Town to Cape Fear (see map of figure C-19), report, that they are of Opinion that the Sum of £200 current Money of this Province should

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(n-4) The History Commission of South Carolina (1951), p. 649.

be allowed to the said Mr. Farris by the Publick to assist him in carrying on so advantagious an Undertaking and to be applied in the Manner proposed by Mr. Farris's letter to Mr. Commissary Dart.

That Mr. Abraham Croft Post Master of Charles Town has been spoke to by your Committee in regard to the Carriage of Letters to and from George Town Winyaw to and from Charles Town aforesaid, and that he is willing to undertake the same every Month without any Charge to the Puvlick. The Post Boy to tarry in Town three Days after his Arrival before he goes back for the Northward."(n-5)

The Farris letter which has been referred to above was ordered to be inserted in the Journals of the House. It read as follows:

"Cape Fair, New Torn, January the 27th, 1739.

Sir,

I have a Commission from Col. Spotswood (see page L-8) to settle a Post through this Province. You remember I mentioned Something of it when last with you and Mr. Rutledge you seemed to think your Assembly would giev Something to help towards carrying it on till such Time the Postage would pay the Charge. Now if you agree to give anything reasonable to carry it from George Town to Little River, the same Person I employ to go there should go to George Town. I am about agreeing with one to go from this to Eden Town from whence they have a regular Post once a month to Virginia. I purpose this once a Month and by this Means a regular Correspondence can be carried on from Boston through all the Northern Colonies to Charles Town. Now as your Province will have great Advantage by this and we shall have the Trouble of carrying a large Number of Letters above 300 Miles backward and fœward for you, and that our Subscription is not likely to come to this Expense, I hope your Assembly will give some small Matter yearly to help the accomplishing so desirable a Scheme. Please to consult Messrs. Manigault and Rutledge upon it, and any other of your Friends and then judge.

It will not be amiss to talk to your Post Master; he has Power to settle it to George Town and my Commission is from thence to Eden Town. I would desire nothing "til the Year's End after it is set on Foot; nor is my view and Profit by it but that I may enjoy in common with all the Pleasure of a re-

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(n-5) George Town is situated on Winyaw Bay.

gular Correspondence.
I am with Esteem, Dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant

William Farris."

Little has been recorded about the results of the Assembly's action to this proposal, however, the Common Journal reporting the Provincial's financial account for the period September 12, 1739 - May 10, 1740, carries an entry reading:

"To Mr. William Farris Post to Cape Fear two hundred Pounds."

Apparently the postal service to and from North Carolina had been established and was operating at that time. However, a letter from Farris to the Speaker of the House, as reported in the Assembly's session of April 27, 1743, gives good reason to believe that things did not go as smoothly as this postman had predicted. The Assembly "did not think themselves obliged to pay more than the first Year's Salary." Hugh Finlay, who rode and walked the entire length of the Charles Town - Cape Fear post road early in 1744, did not mention Farris' carriership in his inspection report. However the description he gave of the "King's Highway" along the Carolina coast (See Chapter C) as he found it at that time makes it understadable why the results of Farris" service did not cause the South Carolina Assembly to renew the contract with this man.

During the ensuing years until the British occupation of the city in 1780 the Charlestown post office was headed by two masters: Charles Shepheard, who succeeded Abraham Croft in May, 1743 in that capacity, and Peter Timothy. The latter of the two was also the printer of the South Carolina Gazette. He took over from Shepheard in February 1748. The combined printery and post offices were located on Broad Street, at the corner next to the Upper Market.

In the Gazette's issue of May 16, 1743, Charles Shepheard, the newly appointed postmaster gave notice:

"... that all the Gentlemen or others may depend on their Letters being safely delivered according to their Directions; and will take Care to forward them to all Gentlemen in the Country, with the utmost Speed; as likewise will deliver what Letters the Country Gentlemen please to send to his Office, in any part of this Town, or forward them to any other part of the Province, or on board any Ships outward bound. If the Gentlemen in the Country will please to order their Patroons or Servants to call, as often as they come to Town, at the Post Office in Broad Street, their Letters shall be safely deliver'd to them, where constant Attendance shall be given by Their most humble Servant

Charles Shepheard."

The announcement was followed by an interesting post scriptum reading:

> "N.B. The Subscriber intends (on Monday the 23rd Inst.) to open the British Coffee Room, where Gentlemen may be entertain'd with the freshest News, foreign and domestick, and accomodated in the genteelest Manner."

The mid-century newspapers carried announcemnets by contractors who offered dispatching services for letters and packages to villages and townships located off the official post roads. Such operations were in no way in competition with the British post office. To the contrary, they were a welcome extension of the regular communication system. In the majority of cases such local services were matters of concern to the provincial governments. However, it was no exception that private citizens were the organizers and offered their services to their subcribers.

The South Carolina Gazette of December 5, 1754 describes in considerable detail such a private post. It utilized a route which in later years would become a part of the official British Charlestown - Savannah post road. The announcement read as follows:

> "A Regular and safe Conveyance for Gazettes, Letters, Etc. having been long wanted throughout this Province, upwards of Fifty Gentlemen at and about Ponpon, sensible of this Disadvantage arising from such Want, have AGREED, (and bound themselves for the Performance of their Agreement) to send, each in his Turn, as his Name stands subscribed, Weekly, a sufficient Boy and Horse to Charles-Town, with Letters, who is to carry back Gazettes, Letters and other Papers; all which are to be lock'd up in a proper Portmanteau, (provided, with a saddle, at the joint Expense of the Subscribers) whereof one Key will be kept at Jacksonburg (n-6) by Mr. Samuel Davison, the other by the Printer hereof. The said Boys to set out from Jacksonburg every Wednesday Morning, by Sun-rise, and be in Charles-Town the same Fternoon, and to set out from Charles-Town every Thursday Morning, by 8 o'clock, to be at Jacksonburg the same Day.
>
> Mr. Davison to take Care of, and to forward to Chares-Town, by such Boys, all Letters delivered to him at Jacksonburg, which are to be sent as directed, the Evening they arrive, by the Printer hereof. The Printer to take Care of, and forward to Jacksonburg, by the said Boys, all Letters, Etc. delivered to him for that Purpose, in Charles-Town, and direct them

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(n-6) See map of figure C-22.

to Mr. Davison; who is to keep the Subscribers' Papers, Letters, Etc. 'till sent for, and dispatch others by the first Opportunities.

Non-Subscribers to pay Mr. Davison, for every single Letter sent by such Boys to Charles-Town, One Shilling and three Pence; for double and other Letters, Etc. in proportion. The same Rates to be paid to the Printer, for all Letters, Etc. to Non-Subscribers at Ponpon and further Southward, which he shall send by the said Boys at Jacksonburg.

No Letters from Non-Subscribers at Jacksonburg will be forwarded or received, by Mr. Davison, nor by the Printer, to Non-Subscribers until the above Rates are already paid.

In consequence of the said Agreement, Mr. Davison and the Printer hereof, are ready to receive and forward Letters, Etc., on the Terms therein mentioned.

The First Boy comes to Town next Wednesday Evening and sets out on his Return the Day following, by 8 o'clock in the Morning.

"Tis hoped this Association will be imitated in such other Parts of this Province, when the like Conveyances are as much wanted, And any Gentlemen inclined to encourage so useful a Design, may take copies of the Articles subscribed by the Ponpon Gentlemen, at the Printer's. Nov. 28, 1754."

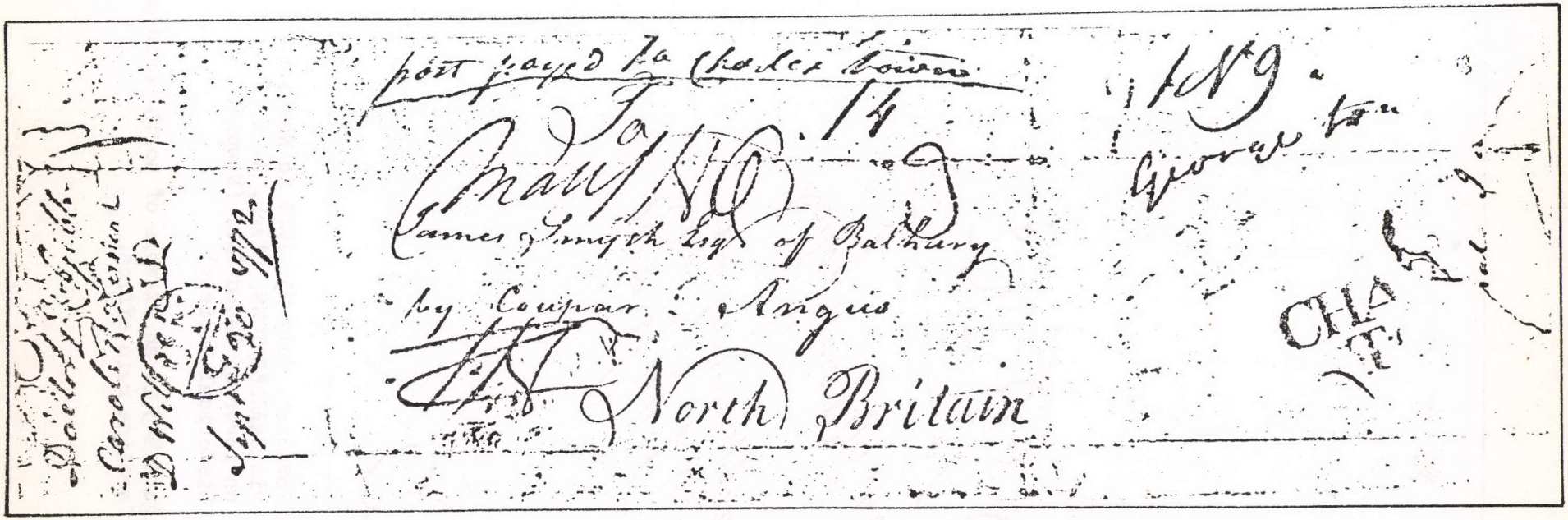
Peter Timothy, the postmaster in Charlestown, who took such a prominent part in furthering the above postal project, continued to serve the town in that capacity for many years. Moreover he became secretary to the Deputy Postmaster General for the southern District when in 1765 the colonial posts were divided by a royal decree. Details of this arrangement and instructions to the officials in Charlestown have been described by Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe (n-7).

The pre-revolution transatlantic mail to and from Charlestown has been described in Chapter F (page F-44), including the mail service with Jamaica via Pensacola, Florida (page F-51).

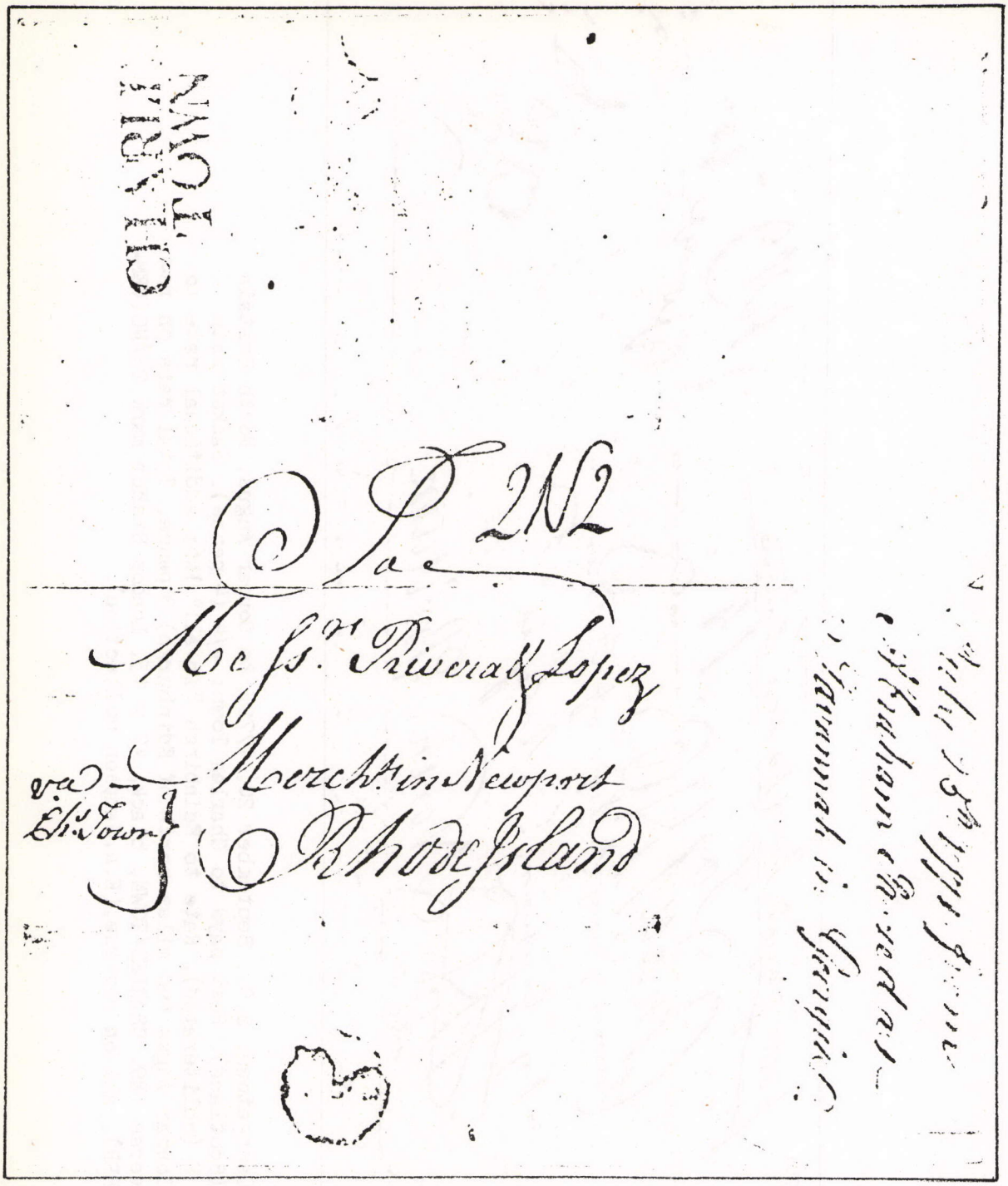
Of interest is a letter, the cover of which is shown in figure N-2. It was mailed from Georgetown, S.C. which had the only other British post office in this colony. As far as is known no town mark was used on the very rare mail which originated in Georgetwon. The town's handwritten name on the reverse of the cover is not believed to be a postal marking.

For many decades Charlestown remained the port of entry and departure for mail coming from and destined for both northern and southern colonies.

(n-7) Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe: The Colonial Posts in the United States of America, 1606-1783 (London, 1967), p. 5.



N-2. Georgetown, S.C., September 20, 1772, to Coupar Angus, North Britain (Scotland). Post payd to Charles Town: -/4 (4 pence). Packet rate 1N (obliterated). Rate to Edinbirgh "in all" 1N6; additional rate to Coupar Angus (40 miles north of Edinburgh) 3 pence. Total rate on reverse 1N9. CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, London Bishop mark 25/NO(VEMBER), all on reverse.(E.N.Sampson collection).



N-3. Savannah, July 25, 1771 to Newport, via CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, on reverse, Rated 2N2. (Newport Historical Society).

The letter in figure N-3 is an example of north-bound postal matter via the South Carolina main office.

In the analysis of a letter's rate during this period one is confronted with the possible modalities of transit to destination. In a case like the letter on the preceeding page several possibilities were available:

a. Coastal - i.e. port to port;
b. Inland - via established post roads;
c. Combinations of sub a and b.

As stated before, at times the post roads in the Southern District were impassable for the post rider on horseback. While transportation by ship had advantages as to cost,particularly in case of greater distances, there were hazards to vessel and crew during the hurricane season plus harassment by privateers.

The rate of 2N2 charged to the letter in figure N-3 can be computed as follows:

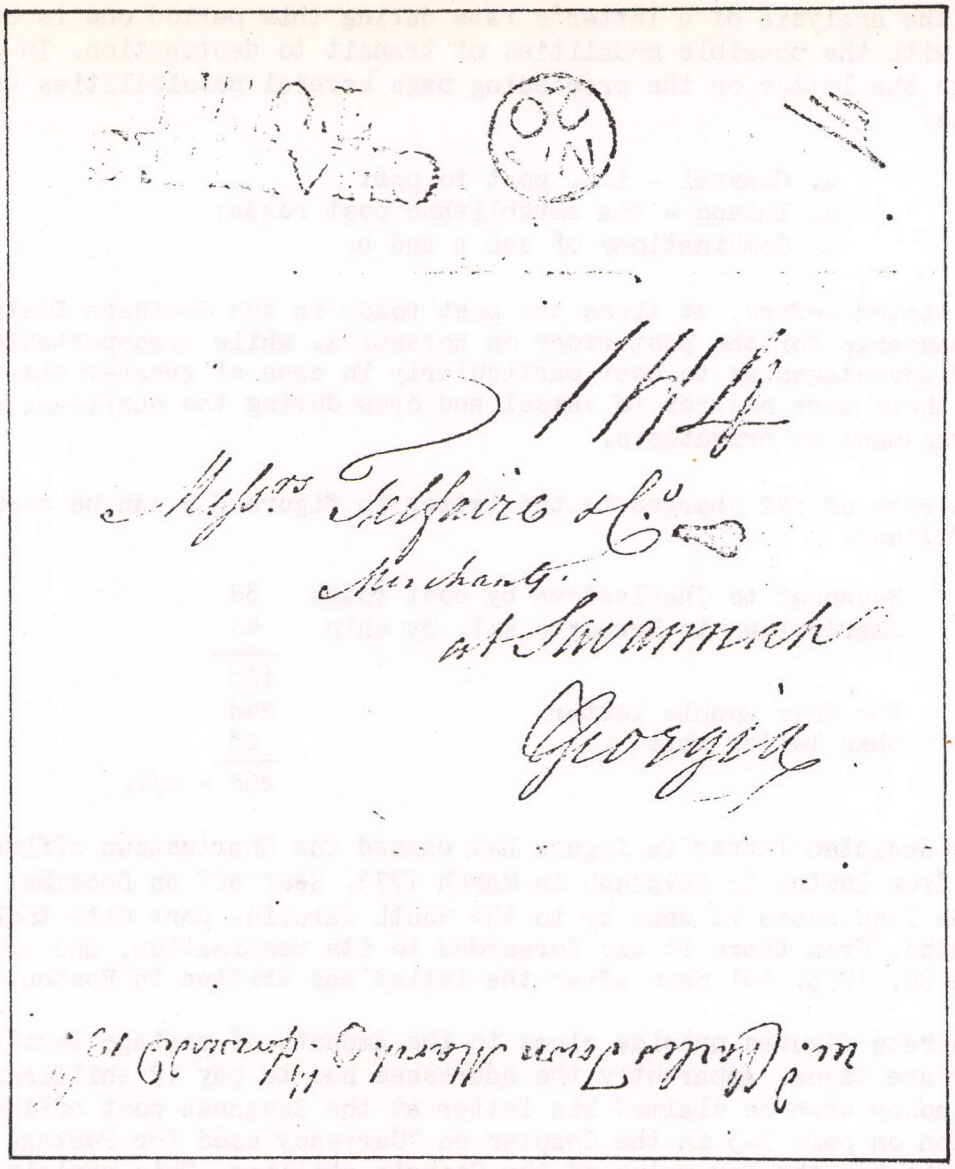
Savannah to Charlestown by post roads	8d
Charlestown to Newport, R.I. by ship	4d
	12d
For this double letter	24d
Ship letter rate	2d
	26d = 2/2.

The depicted letter in figure N-4 passed the Charlestown office on its way from Boston to Savannah in March 1775. Sent off on December 8, 1774, the land route it went by to the South Carolina port city took 3 full months. From there it was forwarded to its destination, and arrived on March 30, 1775, 101 days after the letter was written in Boston.

Two rate figures provide clues to the amounts of postage involved, but they are vague. Apparently the addressee had to pay 17 shillings of Georgia money when he claimed his letter at the Savannah post office. A tabulation on page I-3 in the Chapter on "Currency used for Postage Payment" indicates the low value of the Georgia shilling. This explains at least to a certain extent the high rate of 17 shillings.

According to the official rate tables which were valid at the time the postage for a single letter from Boston to Suffolk, Va., the southern terminal of the northern division, was 7 dwts. 8 grs. From there to Charlestown the rate was 1 shilling, 2 pence, based on a distance of 400-500 miles between the two towns, or 4 dwts, 16 grs. Therefore the total charge for a single letter from Boston to Charlestown would have been 12 dwts, or 3 shillings, and 12 dwts. for a double letter, or 6 shillings sterling. The rate marking of 1/4 on the face of the cover for the distance Charlestown - Savannah, apparently applied by the Charestown post office, indicates that this was a double letter, which finally wound up in the Georgia capital at a charge of 7 shillings 4 pence sterling, or 17 shillings local currency.

It must have given the Savannah postmaster a headache to figure it all out.



N-4. Double letter from Boston, December 8, 1774, to Savannah by land route via CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, March 9, 1775, forwarded from there by land March 13. Savannah Bishop mark M(A)R(CH) 20 (month over date). Rate Charlestown-Savannah 1/4. Total postage on reverse 17 shillings local currency.
(Faulstich collection).

When High Finlay visited Charlestown in December 1773 on his inspection journey through the Southern District he spent sonsiderable time "examining former transactions in this General Office, previous to Mr. Roupell's appointment, and found the books, accounts, papers and everything relative to the former management in the greatest confusion, so as to render it impossible from them, to learn the true state of affairs in this District."

Benjamin Barons and Peter Delancey were Roupell's predecessors as Deputy Postmasters General in the Southern District, with a short interregnum after Delancey's tragic death, when Eleazer Phillips temporarily filled the empty chair. The poor condition of the post roads in the districtmust have been one of the main obstacles to their exercising the necessary control over the few post offices and the mail carriers operating within their jurisdiction. The reader is referred to page C-35, which has drawn a rough picture of the state of affairs in the Savannah post office, and to the isolated position of North Carolina's postal system in order to appreciate how futile a postmaster general's efforts must have been to properly organize and supervise the district's letter post.

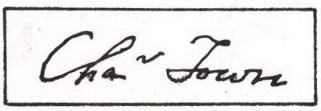
Shortly after Finlay finished his survey in the southern provinces the vexatious smouldrings of dissatisfaction and even of hate, which became evident throughout the country, burst into flame and the majority of Charlestown's citizens joined the revolutionary movement.

In May, 1780 the fight resulted in the occupation of the town by the British army. Roupell, who was a loyalist, took over the local postmastership from Peter Bonnetheau, and remained in that position until December 14, 1782 when the Redcoats left, and Bonnetheau could be reinstated. Five months later, on April 29th, he evacuated his chair and Thomas Hall took over.

Not many letters have survived which were handled by the Charlestown post office during the years of occupation. Apparently Roupell rediscovered the old straight-line CHARLES/TOWN handstamp, which for one reason or another had not been in use since the later part of 1775, and applied it to the outgoing packet letters.

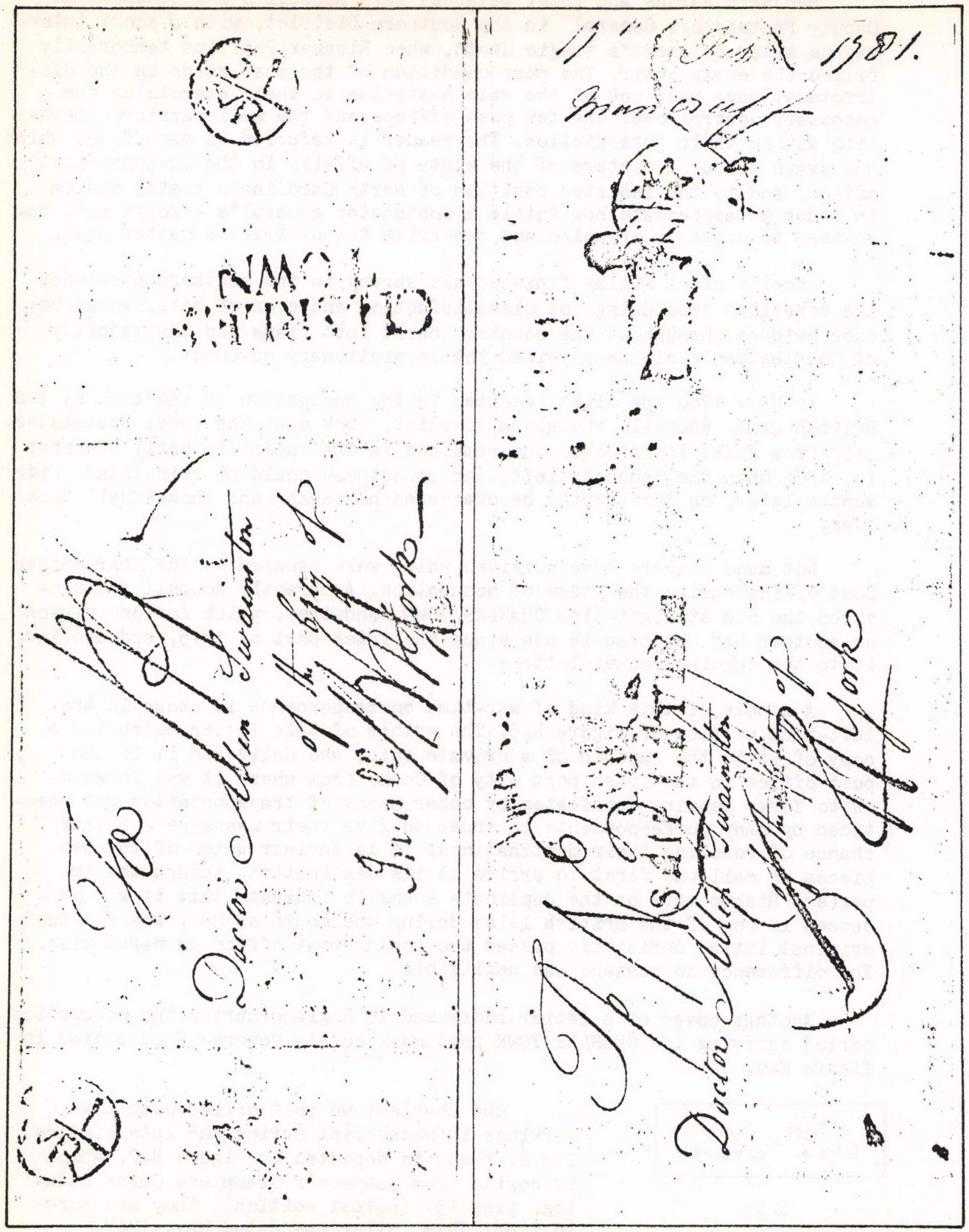
A sample of this kind of war-time correspondence is shown in the left-hand section of figure N-5. The writer of this letter entrusted a copy of it to the captain of a private ship, who delivered it to the post office in the Irish port city of Cork, from where it was forwarded to York. Sending duplicates by other means of transportation was practiced by many correspondents in order to give their messages a better chance of reaching their destinations. It is unclear which of the two pieces of mail was first to arrive at its destination, though the imperfect Bishop mark on the duplicate seems to indicate that it was processed in one of the British Isles during the month of May, whereas the original letter definitely passed the London post office on March 31st. The difference in postage was negligible.

Another cover of a letter addressed to England during the occupation period carrying the CHARLES/TOWN post mark on its reverse is depicted in figure N-6.

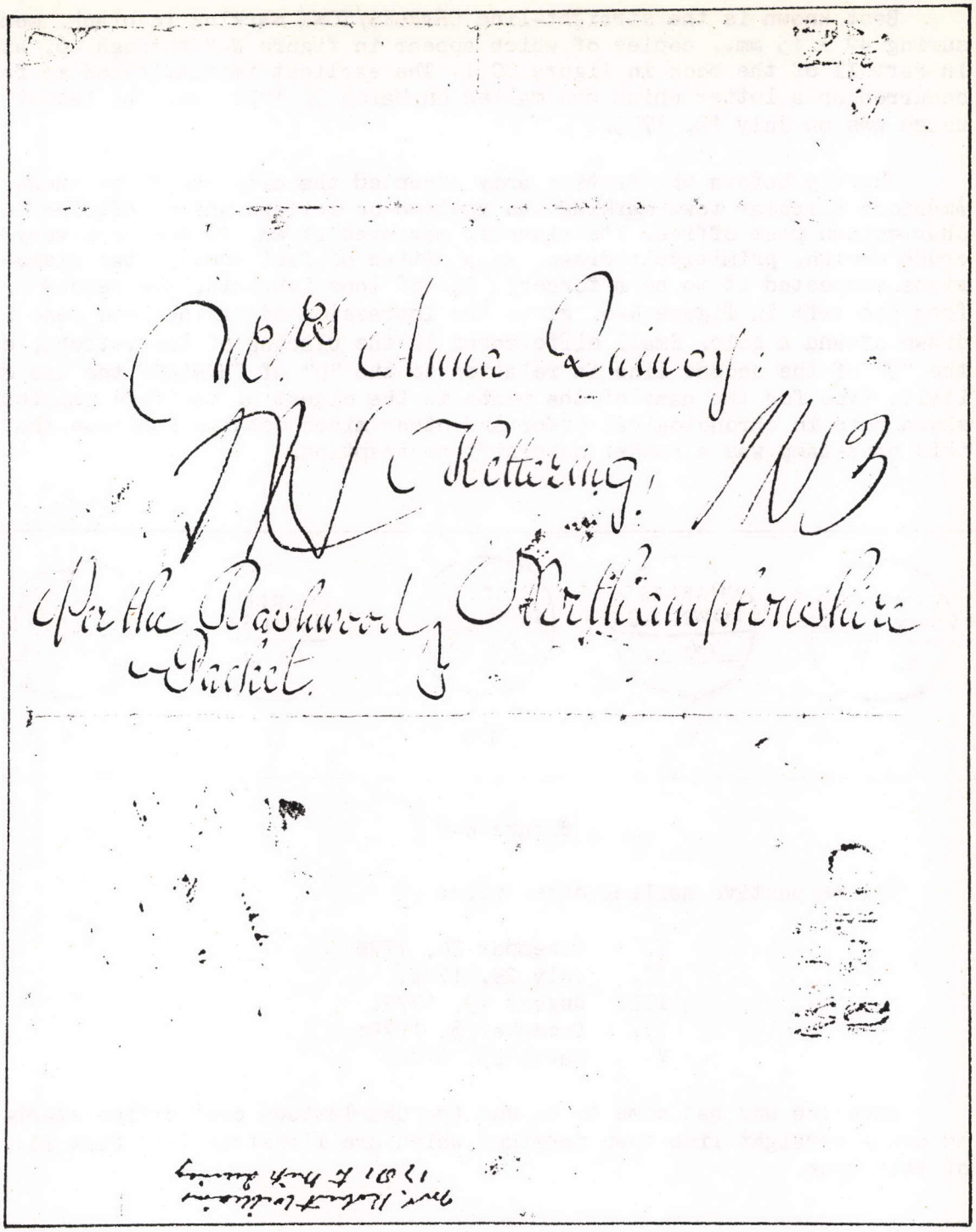


N-7

The Charlestown post office used town markings in manuscript during the late sicties. One of these is depicted in figure N-7, which is copied from Sampson's Stampless Cover Catalog, page 151 (Latest edition). They are hard to find. This letter was dated May, 1767.



N-5. CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, February 2, 1781, during British occupation, to York (Engl.) by packet via London, Bishop mark 31/M(A)R(CH). Rated "In all" 1N4. And its copy as a SHIP LETTER via CORK (Ireland), rated 1N3. (University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library).



N-6. CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, on reverse, December 22, 1781, per the Packet Rashwood, to London and from there to Northamptonshire, at a charge of 3 pence over and above the packet rate of one shilling. (From the second author's collection).

Best known is the straight-line CHARLES/TOWN marking in black, measuring 47 x 15 mm., copies of which appear in figure N-2 through -6, and in Part II of the book in figure SC 1. The earliest imprint found so far occurred on a letter which was mailed on March 3, 1770, and the latest usage was on July 19, 1775.

Shortly before the British army occupied the city the first known American circular town marking was applied on letters which left the Charlestown post office. Its diameter measured 21 mm. It was of a very crude design, primitively drawn. As a matter of fact some postal historians suspected it to be a forgery. One of thes imprints, the second form the left in figure N-8, gives the impression of having been pen-drawn around a coin. Small differences in the placing of the letters, e.g. the "O" of the second line in relation to the "H" of CHARLES, the use of italic type for the name of the month in the oldest of the five imprints shown here in chronological order and other minor details indicate that this handstamp was a rather makeshift contraption.

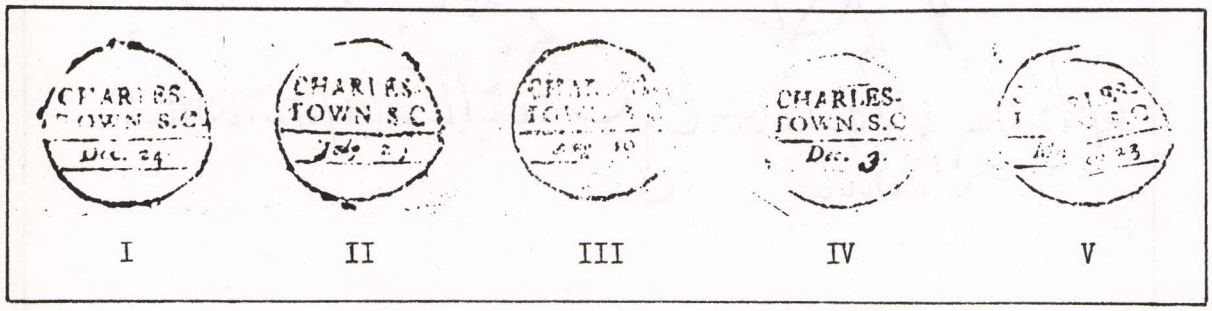


Figure N-8

The respective mailing dates were:

I. December 24, 1778;
II. July 29, 1779;
III. August 19, 1779;
IV. December 3, 1779;
V. March 23, 1780.

When the war had come to an end the Charlestown post office started using straight-line town markings which are illustrated in Part II of this book.

O. Maryland Colonial Post

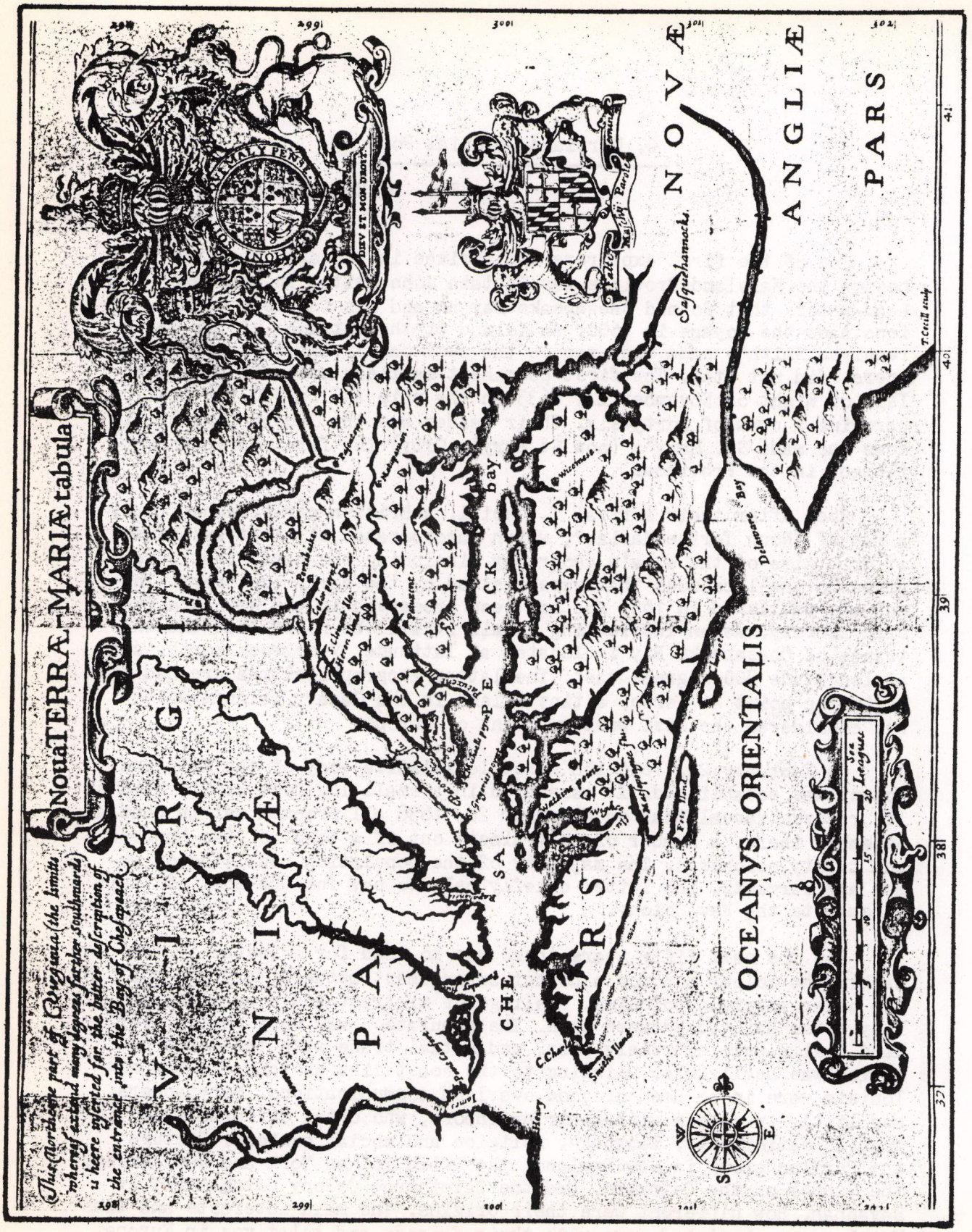
the Rev. D. Homer Kendall

One of the first explorers who arrived in the area that was to become the Maryland Province was Captain John Smith. In search of the head-waters that formed Chesapeake Bay he and his fourteen companions made the voyage in 1608. An island at the entrance of the Bay received Smith's name (see map on the next page). But these adventurers did not stay. The first permanent settlers set sail from the Isle of Wight on November 22, 1633 in the ship ARK, a 350 ton boat, carrying a crew of forty-six. Their leader was the Second Lord Baltimore who made St. Mary's (now St.Mary's City) the first European settlement in the Province.

Soon after their arrival T. Cecill, a British cartographer, drew a map of "Noua Terrae-Mariae", which incorporated all that was known at that time of the area's geography, including the names that were given to the locations that were visited by the early explorers. The map was published in 1635 and has been preserved in the New York Public Library. As an interesting detail it will be noted that the entrance of Chesapeake Bay is located at latitude 37 degrees north, and at longitude 300 degrees east. The latter geographical measure had its beginning point at Ferro, a tiny island in the Canary Islands which was considered the most western point of Europe.

On February 26, 1636 the first legislative body of the Maryland Colony was established. It assembled in a small log fort at St. Mary's. Its records reveal that on November 28, 1638 all freemen met in General Assembly there, a number of only ninety out of a total of two hundred and twenty colonists. The majority of the population consisted of women and servants, the latter chiefly held to pay for the cost of their passage to the New Colony.

For the next fifty years there was no need for a postal system within the colony nor for a postal arrangement between Maryland and the other American colonies. Feelings of mistrust and even of hostility often existed between them. The population was very small, overland trails were extremely poor, and mutual trade with the early colonies was negligible. Clinging to the coast line as they did the colonists were in no need of good overland communications. Marylanders had little in common with their neighbors, who often differed from them in nationality, language, religion and social customs. Picture the Puritan group in New England, the Dutch in New York and New Jersey, the Swedes on the Delaware, and the Oglethorpe Colony established at Savannah. How different were their origins. The main interests and ties Marylanders cherished were with their friends and relatives in Europe. And thus letters exchanged between Maryland and the homeland account-



Map of Maryland, 1635.
Figure O-1

ed for the greater part of the mail for a number of years (o-1).

A letter from Virginia's Secretary addressed to Lord Baltimore, dated April 25, 1638, shown in Chapter B, figure B-2, forms one of the great exceptions of inter-colonial correspondence in those early days.

Today we find it nearly impossible to visiualize the scene of pristine Maryland without a Baltimore, an Annapolis, or a Salisbury, without even a cleared path beyond the narrow strip of sand, edging a bay, unpoluted yet (o-2).

The mail, at first of necessity, was carried by ship captains or by passengers between the homeland and Maryland. In the Maryland Proceedings, Vol. 4, on page 174 we read:

> "... the 21st of July 1638 - David Morehead did deliver His Majesty's letter to the Lord Baltimore. The said Morehead required an answer from his Lordship to take back to London." (o-3)

Ship mail was of the greatest importance

Though the earliest records of the Maryland General Assembly date back to January 25, 1637, the first reference to the handling of letters in these records was dated April 25, 1661. Prior to 1661 all correspondence in Maryland was carried by private persons. A letter written in 1652 by Samuel Symonds of Ipswich, Mass. to John Winthrop, Jr. at Pequot says:

> "I cannot say but its besides my intentions that I write not more frequently unto you; I can only plead this for my excuse .. and the uncertainty when and how to convey letters." (O-4)

A glance at the correspondence of that period shows that Mr. Symonds was not the only one who was inconvenienced by the "uncertainty when and how to convey letters." Without a postal service the letter writers of that day depended upon the individuals who could be recruited for that service. Indians were often used as carriers (o-5). It is no wonder that mail was lost or greatly delayed in reaching its destination.

Many merchants of Maryland and Virginia were anxious to see a trans-oceanic postal service of a more reliable kind instituted. When finally in the mid-eighteenth century a packet mail system began to operate they accepted the fact that the government ships docked in New York rather than in some southern port. This was a great conces-

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(o-1) Carl H. Scheele: A Short History of the Mail Service. Washington, 1970.

(o-2) Aubrey C. Land: Planters of Colonial Maryland. Maryland Historical Magazine, Spring, 1872.

(o-3) Maryland Assembly Proceedings, Maryland Archives, Annapolis.

(o-4) Massachusetts Historical Collections, 4th Ser, Vol.VII, pp. 128.

(o-5) Mary E.Woolley: The Early History of the Colonial Post Office. Rhode Island Historical Society, 1894.

sion on the part of the Maryland colonist since the overland journey to and from New York was another long and uncertain link in the communication system. It was not until 1764 that a similar service was extended to the southern colonies, but since Charlestown was chosen as its terminal little benefit was gained for the Maryland Colony.

Letters traveled very slowly in those early days. The Assembly Proceedings of August 24, 1659, Vol. III, on page 380 have recorded Maryland Governor's answer to the Governor of Virginia:

> "I have just now received a letter of yours bearing date of July 24, the messenger affirming that the letter came but last night to Memeny so that it hath been a full month from you hither."

Three or four months might pass before a planter could receive an anwer to a letter by which he ordered supplies form England. Letters arriving by ship were often delivered to a coffee house close to the wharf. In the colonial period they were the popular places where ship masters made their headquarters and transacted their business. The mail would often lay exposed on their racks or tables until called for, or taken by a friend to its destination. This state of affairs led to many abuses until post offices were established in the larger port towns, but continued up to 1774 in smaller places (o-6).

It took fully a century after the first settlement of Maryland before adventuring colonists began to turn their attention away from tidewater. During the entire colonial period transportation by water dominated all traffic in the Maryland Province. The roads of the sea, of the bays and the rivers were there and available for their use without the need for maintenance. Experience accumulated during a century of navigation by water made it possible for the settlers to select the best type of boats. But when penetration of the interior became a necessity they had to turn to the foot travel of the savage. No carriages, carts or even horses could be used. The rough and heavily wooded marshy areas around Chesapeake Bay made the building of roads for wheeled vehicles almost an impossibility. Eventually the early Indian foot paths were widened into horse trails and much later into roads.

But in a land so well provided with deep bays, estuaries and navigable rivers obviously no roads were needed. The Chesapeake Bay flowing to and from the Atlantic poked around the various capes to the heads for distances of one or two hundred miles, here and there spilling over into numerous tidal navigable tributaries. Maryland can boast of having more river frontage than any other state - some thirty-nine rivers plus a three thousnad mile long shoreline.

Therefore it is not surprising that Maryland's early settlers sought locations along these shores and continued to live there in later years. They followed the Potomac River until their boats could go

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(o-6) Harry M. Konwiser: Colonial and Revolutionary Posts. Richmond, 1931.

no farther. As early as 1680 a settlement was made at the mouth of Rock Creek.

The first legislative concern about the conveyance of letters in the Maryland Colony can be found in the Assembly proceedings, Vol. 1, page 402. We read:

> "Thursday, the 25th of April 1661 - Ordered that an Acte for Conveyance of all Letters concerning the State and publicke Affairs be sent downe to the lower howse whoe desired to certefye the amendments as they shall thinke fitt."

The Assembly Proceedings, Vol.1 - Tuesday the 30th of April, 1661 have recorded the following:

> "Then was read the Acte for Conveyance of all letters Concerning the State and Publicke Affairs."

Which was voted unanimously to pass.

> "Be it enacted by the authority of this present Generall Assembly that all Letters whatsoever to or sent from the Governor or Governor and Councell or any his Lords Councellers or Justice of the peace touching the publike affairs of this Province shall without delay be sent from howse to howse, the direct way till they be safely deliuered as directed; And every person after Receipt of such Letter delaying to carry the said Letters to the next howse above the tearme of halfe an howse shall pay for a fine to the Lord Proprietor One hundred pounds of tobacco vnless it were deliuered soe late in the daye as that it could not before night be deliuered at the next howse or that through violence or wynd or Tempest it could by noe means be sent over the Creeke or River, if any Chance to be bewteene the howse where such Letter shall be deliuered and the howse to which it ought to be Conveyed; And be it further Enacted that all publike letters shall be superscribed by the person directing or sending the said letter vpon the out side of the said letter that is to be sent from howse to howse And then subscribe his name. This Act to endure three yeares or to the end of the next Generall Assembly."

The weaknesses of this arrangement soon became apparent. We read in the Assembly Proceedings of Maryland, Vol.1 - Wednesday 2nd April 1662: an Act concerning the transportation of public letters.

> "Voted the Lower House be moved to some more effective way for the transportation of public letters."

In 1662 a case was dragged through the Maryland Colonial Courts

involving a person who was an unwilling bearer of a "Letter concerning the state and public affairs." Suit was brought by the Attorney General against Peter Sharp and John Gary, who were accused of opening a letter from Governor Charles Calvert to Mr. Edward Lloyd, the letter bearing with it "the lawes of the County rolled up, which were both well sealed."

Thomas Manning testified he had turned over the letter intact to James Elton, by whom it was handed to the nearest neighbor, and then it went from neighbor to neighbor, until it reached Peter Sharp and his servant, Margery Grieve. Here Nicholas Carr, the next deponent, averred that he had received the message from Sharp with the true seal defaced and salve substituted. He also ventured the observation that "somebody had been nibling about that that did not concern them." Robert Harwood reported that he had seen John Gary "fingering the laws" and that Gary had said "he would fain read them." Other witnesses who had passed on the letter and laws either testified that the seal had been broken or that salve had been used in its stead.

Officials of the Provincial Government brought the matter into court and summoned witnesses. It is easy to infer that no such action, if any, would have been taken if private letters passing from hand to hand, had been opened. Consequently the few local letters which have been preserved are free of reflections upon neighbors. Those addressed to correspondents in England are about the only letters that bear information concerning the politics, opinions of this Province's people (o-7).

Aside from the inconveniences to private citizens under the provisions of the Act of 1661 the danger of loss and delay must indeed have been considerable.

As early as 1666 the Assembly of Maryland began the task of expediting communication between the different parts of the Colony. The Proceedings - Tuesday afternoon, April 17, of that year have recorded:

> "Then came a bill likewise entitled an Act for making highways and marking the heads of Rivers, Creeks, Branches and Swamps passable for Horse and Foot."

The Act was passed on April 19, 1666.

The improved roads eased the task of anyone who carries letters in intra-colony communication. But the problem of mail transportation overland was not easily solved. For one thing the carriers had to depend heavily on ferries and on the manner in which they were operated. Of particular importance were those across the Choptank and Nanticoke rivers, both on the east side of the Bay, and also the one over the Patuxent River at Point Patience. An annual salary of 4,000

(o-7) Andrews: The Founding of Maryland.

pounds of tobacco were allowed the ferrymen.

Maryland has been linked with the progress of the postal system since its very beginning. The first intercolonial post had its start under William Penn, when in 1683 post riders carried mail between Philadelphia and Maryland. In that year the leader of the Quaker Colony granted Henry Waldy of Tekonay the right to carry letters and to supply travelers with horses to New Castle in the south and northward to the Falls-Of-the-Delaware. This was a weekly post. It went over trails that were marked only by blazed trees. The times of departure were published "on the meeting house door" and in other conspicious places (o-8). With the exception of its rate schedule (see Chapter on Rates of Postage) no details of its operation or results have been recorded.

Ten years later this experimental mail system, which for the first time tried to serve two neighboring provinces, was followed by a new postal venture which on a considerably enlarged scale planned to promote correspondence between all American colonies. The Patent issued for this purpose by the British Government to Thomas Neale and its operational results are extensively described in Chapter K under the title "Andrew Hamilton, the Father of the American Post". Hamilton, who was Neale's representative in America and the scheme's active spirit, did all he could to make it a success.

For various reasons the system's favorable results in the colonies of the north rapidly tapered off commensurate with the distance from Philadelphia southward. The colonies were invited to pass acts for the support of the new post, which the majority of them did, but Maryland, North Carolina declined to do so, and Virginia by other legislative measures prevented the actual operation of Neale's post, while South Carolina "made an unavailing effort". Georgia ignored it.

William Smith (o-9) explained these divergent reactions as follows:

> "The mode of approaching the southern governments differed from that taken in laying the proposition before the Northern colonies. In case of the northern colonies Hamilton dealt with the legislatures in person. The draft bill which he prepared was submitted as a basis for discussion. So far as it went it was accepted, and Hamilton agreed to such additions as the legislatures concidered necessary in view of local circumstances.
>
> Virginia and Maryland were approached quite differently. They were advised of the scheme not by Hamilton, but by the English court. In the minutes of council of both governments, it is recorded that the proposition was laid before them in a letter from the queen."

(o-8) Wesley Everett Rich: The History of the United States Postoffice to the Year 1829. (Cambridge, 1924), p. 8.

(o-9) William Smith: History of the Post Office in British North America, 1920. p. 12

The Minutes of the Maryland Council, dated May 10, 1693, refer to this royal letter in the following words:

> "Produced and read to the Board a letter from the Queen dated the 26th of May 1692 to his Excellency the Governor relating to the Post Office to be erected for the convenience of conveying all letters and passengers together with certain proposal of Col. Hamilton, the Governor of East and West Jersey, Post Master General appointed which were well approved of by the Board but being of great moment and publick concern resolved that the same be recommended earnestly with the approbation of this Board to the consideration of the next Assembly as a matter of great import and conveniency to the Province, and if it shall then be thought fit that an act of assembly pass to establish such office his Excellency and this Board do engage to take all the care imaginable for the more ready passage of the posts to and fro."

Things moved slowly in those days. Despite the Board's approbation of the Hamilton proposal it took the Assembly seventeen months to place the subject on its agenda. Its Proceedings of October 1, 1694 reveal the following on page 25:

> "Col. Hamiltons Lr. to the late Governor Copley with his proposalls about the post Office together with her Majesties Royall Letter in favour thereof, Esqr. Neales Patent for being post Master Genll. of America and the afd. Coll. Hamiltons Deputacon from the said Esq. Neale being produced & pervsed here and Recommended to the House of Burgesses for their consideracon."

According to the Journal of Proceedings the "Deputation from the said Esq. Neale ... was referred to the next Session of Assembly." Though Smith's statement: "Maryland rejected it outright" in his book is not entirely correct, it is a fact that subsequent actions taken in Maryland prove its reluctance to accept the postal scheme.

On May 14, 1695 governor Nicholson, who had succeeded Copley in 1691, suggested to the Council:

> "that some person of trust be imploy'd in the Nature of a publick Post to keep going betwixt Potomack & Philadelphia for the Carrying all Letters betwixt said places, and that a Certain yearly sallary be settled upon such person."

The House adopted that suggestion. Though the pertinent records are missing its approval is recited in the here following proclamation of Governor Nicholson which he issued on May 22, 1695. John Perry, who had presented his petition the previous year, was entrusted the carrying of the post eight times a year at the annual salary of 50 pounds sterling on condition that he discharge all public messages and packets as His Excellency shall direct (o-10).

(o-10) L.M.Rellim: Maryland Colonial Post. The New Southern Philatelist, pp. 205-07.

"That the route begin at Newtons Point upon Wicomico River in Potomack & from thence to go to Allens Mill, from Allens Mill to Benedict Leonard Town, from Benedict Leonard Leonard Town over Patuxent River to Mr. George Lingause. From Mr. Lingaus to Mr. Larkins, and so to South River and Annapolis, formerly Ann Arundell, from thence to Kent & so to William Stadt formerly Oxford, and from thence to Daniel Toas's and so on to Adam Petersens and from thence to New Castle & so directly to Philadelphia & Returne the say Way back again to Potomack.

And at all those places receive, carry, bring and leave all pacquets and letters of and from the inhabitants of this Province at his nearest stages according to the direction of the same, for which he is to take no gratuity or reward for carrying any letters from this province to Philadelphia or bringing any from Philadelphia hither and delivering the same according to direction at his nearest stages. And if further occasion require he is to goe to New York, Virginia or else where as by me he shall be directed for which the assembly of this province have agreed to allow the sum of 50 pounds sterling yearly. And to the end due notice here or may be given I hereby command the sheriffes of the province to make proclamation here of in the most public and convenient places within their repective counties. Given at Annapolis under the great seal of the Province - May 22, 1695."

"The foresaid Post is to set forward his stages from Newtons Point (God willing) the last Monday in June next and this is to give notice that all letters that are to be delivered into the Secretary's office for all persons to have recourse to." (o-11)

How successful this post has been is hard to say. Very little reference to it has been found. W. Harrison Bayles in an article on the Postal Service in the Thirteen Colonies has reported the following:

"It appears that John Perry was sent with a letter to Governor Fletcher of New York, in October, 1695, in February, 1695-96, and again in April, 1696. As he was employed to carry a general mail, there does not seem to be any reason to doubt that, on his way to New York with the Governor's letters, he carried the general mail over the proposed route to Philadelphia, and took up the mail for Maryland on his return trips. In March, 1698, he continued in his employment for the ensuing year, but before the new year he died. The Governor, having occasion to send to the Governor of New York and twice to Virginia, employed one Joseph Mann 'for which services by him performed and more of the like nature to be done', it was

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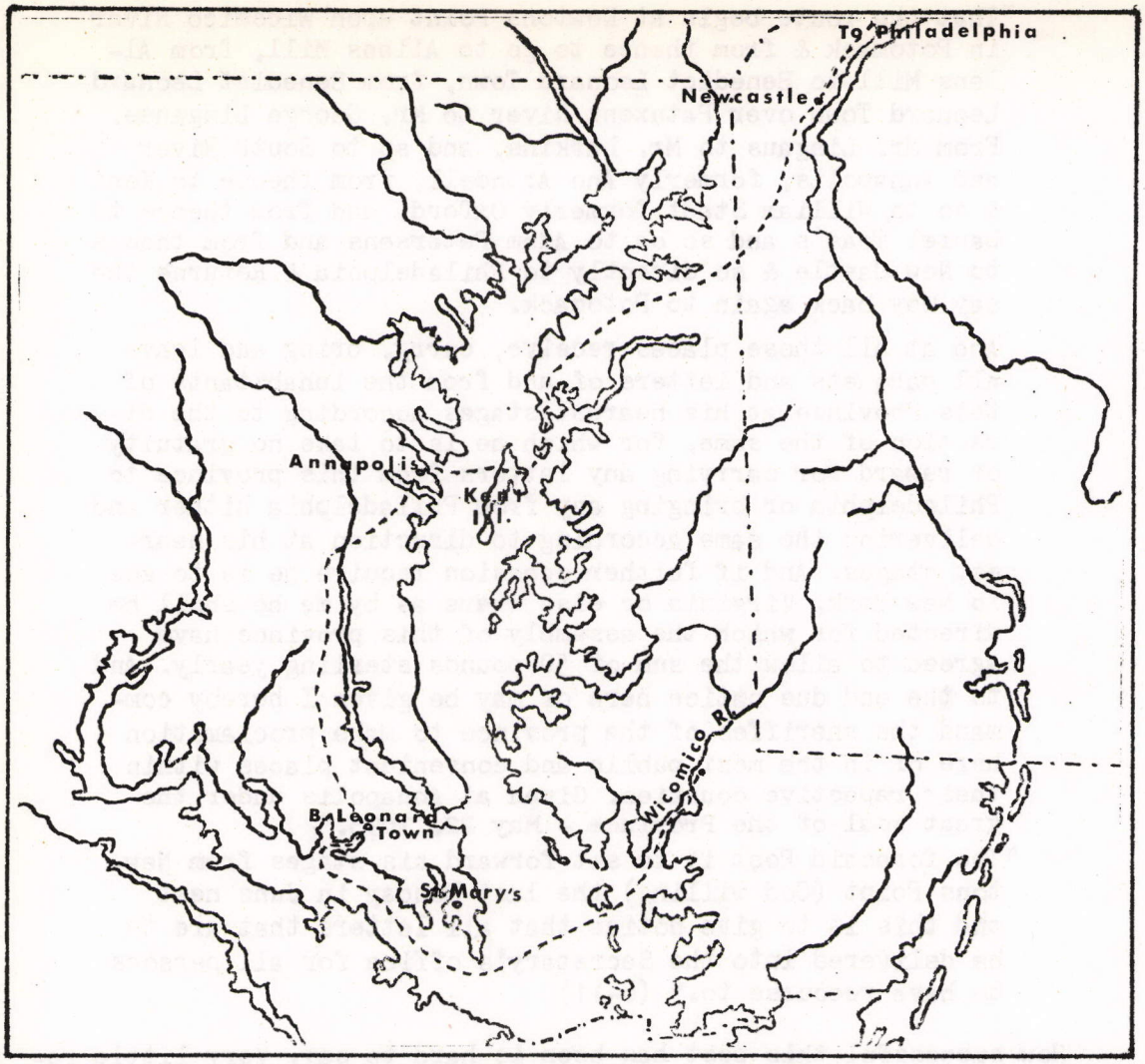
(o-11) W. Harrison Bayles: Postal Service in the Thirteen Colonies. The Jornal of American History. Vol.5, No.3 (1911), pp. 436-38.



O-2 Postal route Wicomico, Maryland to Philadelphia, 1695.

recommended that he be allowed twenty-five pounds the half of what Parry was to have. The house, however, voted that he should have only twenty pounds."

The same author continues:

"The post to Maryland and Virginia probably did not continue after Perry's death, for Lord Cornbury in 1704, in writing to the Government at home, states that if he has any letters to send either to Virginia or Maryland he must either send an express or else by some traveler going thither. An express to Virginia took three weeks." (o-12)

The map of figure O-2 shows the roundabout character of this south-north postal route. The many rivers and estuaries on the east-

(o-12) Lord Cornbury was Governor of New York.

ern peninsula prevented a carrier to follow a direct course by land, if there was any. It also demonstrates the importance of Kent Island as a link in the east-west postal system across the Bay. The very first trading post in Maryland territory was established by Virginians on this island, which was turned over by them to Lord Baltimore in 1632.

Maryland's government continued postponing constructive decisions regarding the posts and repeatedly "... ordered that the same be referred to the consideration of the next Assembly." However, they had a valid excuse. The physical obstacles to a satisfactory postal connection between north and south through their water-bound colony were many and the cost of removing them was high. Hamilton reported in 1699 to the Postmasters General in London: "The Charges of settling a Post throughout Virginia and Maryland will cost atleast 500 pounds p. ann. & 100 letters in a year will not come from those Collonys to the neighbouring Colonys their Correspondence being chiefly with Europe."

The unsatisfactory situation was much more than a local problem because letter writers in the north for their overseas correspondence often had to make use of the opportunity offered by the tobacco ships sailing from Virginia.

It was again Governor Cornbury, who wrote to the Lords of Trade on June 30, 1704:

> "... an Express ... is often retarded for want of boats to cross those great rivers they must go over or else for want of horses ... The least I have known any Express take to go from hence to Virginia has been three weeks, so that very often, before I can hear from Col. Nicholson what time the fleet will sail and send my packets, the fleet is sailed. I hope we shall find a way to remedy that shortly, for Col. Nicholson and Col. Seymour have wrote me word that they will be here in September, and I do then intend to propose to them the settling of a post, to go through to Virginia...."

Cornbury's scheme, as he tells in another letter, dated November 6, 1704, was to lay a tax in each province by an Act of Assembly, for defraying the charges of the post, which might then have gone from Boston to North Carolina. Local affairs prevented the attendance of the southern representatives however, and this appears to have thwarted the plan. A system of road administration was introduced then based on obligatory maintenance work by all taxable men. The need for a better transportation of the mail continued to be a problem in Maryland.

Assides from the transportation difficulties another complication arose. It frequently happened that letters of importance containing bills of exchange fell into the hands of dishonest persons along the way. A law was passed on April 15, 1707, being "An Act to prevent the abuse of breaking open and concealing public and private letters." (o-13)

(o-13) Acts of Maryland, March 26, 1707, pp. 275-6.

It provided a hearing "Either in Provincial or County Courts" and if found guilty of purloining a private letter to "suffer imprisonment of his or her body or bodies for the space of six days without bail or Mainprize and forfeit the sum of five pounds of sterling." If it had been a public letter then the punishment was increased to two months and twenty pounds sterling, respectively. In every case half of the money fine was given to the informer. At the same time sheriffs who delayed the transmission of official correspondence were subject to a fine of two thousand poundsof tobacco. These laws continued in force untill the establishment of William Goddard's Constitutional Postal service in 1774. (o-14)

An Act of Parliament passed during the reign of Queen Anne and became effective in 1711, designated New York as the center of postal operations and proviced that a Deputy Postmaster General be appointed. It also established rates of postage which meant a charge of one shilling for a single letter sent from New York to Annapolis, the chief town in Maryland.

John Hamilton, the son of Andrew who was Neale's deputy at the turn of the century, tried to inaugurate the new postal establishment. Thus the American Weekly Mercury of February 26, 1722 announced:

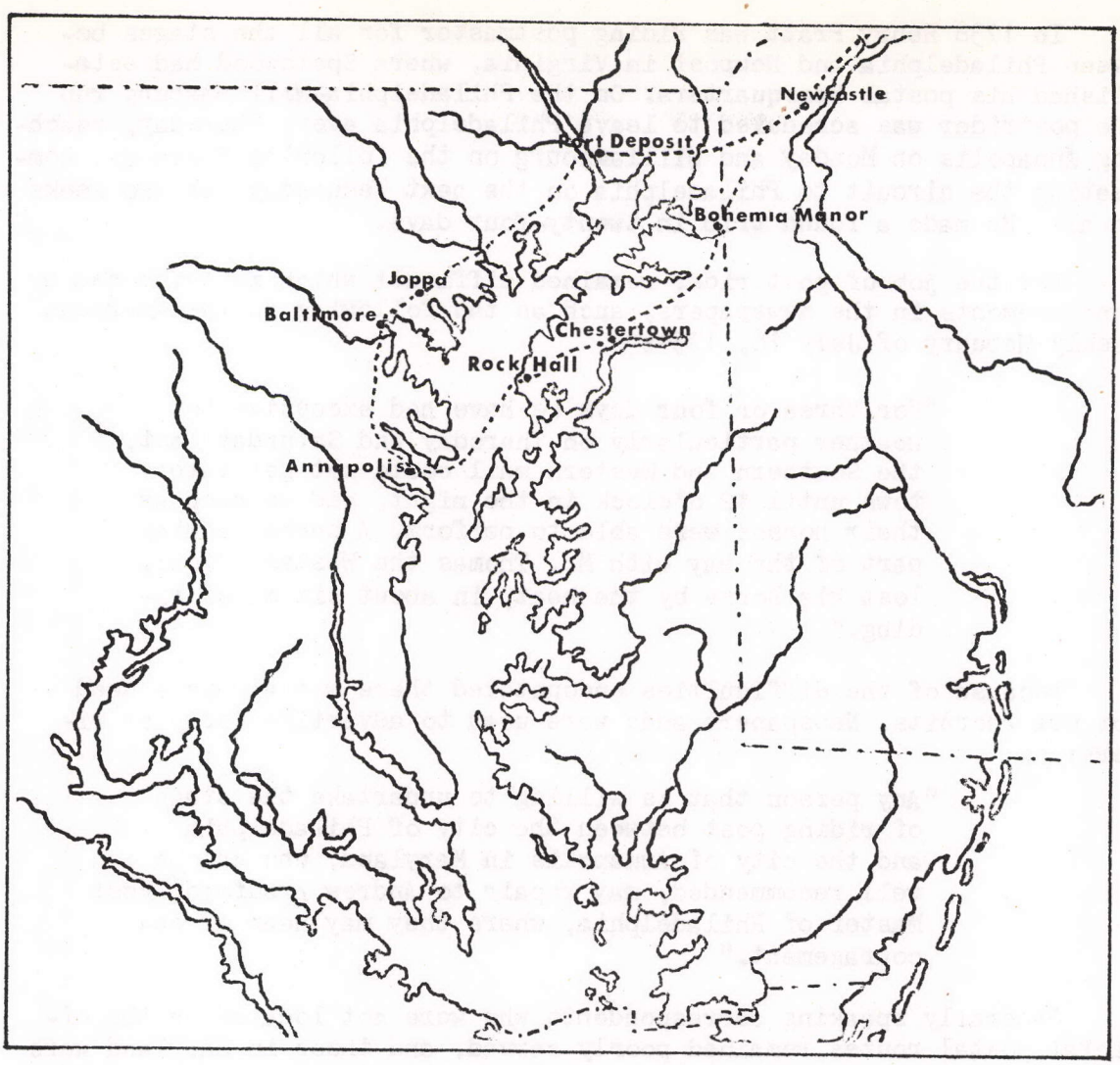
> "Publick notice is hereby given that the post from this city of Philadelphia to the city of Annapolis in Maryland will set out, God willing, about the middle of March next."

Six years later, on April 4, 1728, William Bradford, Philadelphia's postmaster, advertised in the American Weekly Mercury:

> "This is to give notice, that on Friday the thirsd day of May next, a Post will set out from the city of Phidelphia to proceed by the way of Chester, New-Castle, etc. down the Western-Shore of Chesapeake Bay, to the city of Annapolis in Maryland, to return from tence up the Eastern Shore to Philadelphia, the stage to be performed every fortnight; except the three winter months, then only once each month for the convenience of merchants, etc. proper persons will be appointed at Chester, New-Castle, and in the several counties of Maryland to receive letters and packets which shall be delivered with punctual care.
>
> The said post will be kept at the house of Andrew Bradford of Philadelphia and William Parks in Annapolis; and notice shall be given of all other places on the road, that shall be fixed on for the reception and delivery of letters."

The map of figure O-3 illustrates the routes that were followed through Maryland.

(o-14) L.M.Rellim: Maryland Colonial Post. The New Southern Philatelist.



O-3. Maryland postal routes in 1728.

When Alexander Spotswood, ex-Governor of Virginia, became Deputy Postmaster General for the Colonies in 1730, with headquarters on Philadelphia, he showed a keen interest in colonial affairs, particularly in promoting the Grand Line of Post, connecting north and south. (See Chapter C). The Maryland section of this route is described in the July 6, 1732 issue of the American Weekly Mercury:

> "The southern Post set out this morning from Post Office (Philadelphia) at the sign of the Bible in 2nd Street, in order to perform that stage to New Castle, weekly, and to proceed by different stages to Susquehanna, Joppa, Patapsco, Annapolis, Marlborough, Potowmack River, New-Post, Mattapony River, Williamsburg, York-Town, Hampton, Isle of Wright, Bennets-Creek, and Edenton in North Carolina."

In 1738 Henry Pratt was riding postmaster for all the stages between Philadelphia and Newpost in Virginia, where Spotswood had established his postal hearquarters. On the Philadelphia-Williamsburg run the postrider was scheduled to leave Philadelphia every Thursday, reaching Annapolis on Monday and Williamsburg on the following Thursday, completing the circuit to Philadelphia on the next Wednesday, or two weeks in all. He made a round trip in twenty-four days.

But the job of post rider remained difficult which is evidenced by announcements in the newspapers, such as the following in the American Weekly Mercury of July 18, 1734:

> "For three or four days we have had excessive hot weather particularly on Thursday and Saturday last, the Southern and Western mail could not get into town until 12 o'clock in the night, and as much as their horses were able to perform. A person coming part of the way with Mr. Thomas the Western rider, lost his horse by the heat, in about six miles riding."

Because of the difficulties encountered there was always a need for new recruits. Newspapers adds were used to advertise for post riders:

> "Any person that is willing to undertake the stage of riding post between the city of Philadelphia and the city of Annapolis in Maryland, who can be well recommended, may repair to Andrew Bradford, Post Master of Philadelphia, where they may hear of encouragement."

Generally speaking correspondents who were not located on the official postal routes remained poorly served, and those in Maryland were no exception. They depended on travelers who happened to pass by and offered their services. Otherwise they had to send someone to the nearest post office which was often several miles away. The following quotation exemplifies the hardships of those writers:

> "I have notified these two days by notice given me of a letter seen at George Town (about nine miles off) directed to me with the postage marked on it. I sent to inquire about it yesterday, and find it was delivered to somebody to be left at a certain place for me; I sent thither, but no letter was found. So it is not likely, I shall hear from you until you write again."

Gradually private letter and packet services were established and the government of Maryland, within its own borders, opened postal roads and post offices here and there to communities off the main routes. They followed the examples set by other colonies. However, such postal services were seldom reliable, dependent as they were on weather conditions. Navigation on the rivers and creeks became almost impossible

in winter time. Moreover some times the post was not dispatched until a sufficient number of letters had been deposited to pay for the charges. In some cases a post ride was paid by public subscription.

In the course of time Annapolis became the place where riders from north and south met and exchanged the mail. Jonas Green, the printer of the Maryland Gazette, was the local postmaster. On April 28, 1748 he reported in his paper:

> "The Northern and Southern Post-Riders will meet here on Monday the 11th of May, and on every other Monday regularly, until the Winter."

The people and merchants of Maryland had many opportunities to send letters on private ships to England and the continent of Europe. Acts passed in 1660 and 1750 had helped to make letter transportation by boat more safe. But despite these laws many of the captains preferred to deliver their letters ar some coffeehouse, there to be called for, rather than take the trouble to hand them to the post office.

Marylanders saw their postal desires only partially fulfilled when a packet line was officially set up by the Crown to sail between New York and the English port of Falmouth. In 1755 the Lieutenant Governor, Horatio Sharpe, was advised of this radical change in the transatlantic mail service (see Chapter F) by a letter from John Pownall, Secretary to the Postmaster General, dated White Hall, November 4th, 1755. It is depicted in figure O-4. The other colonial governors were similarly advised of this fundamental step taken by the Crown. (o-15)

This packet line, while somewhat inconvenient, since mail had to be gotten to New York by post and at additional cost, was far better than what had existed up until this time.

Four months later the Maryland Gazette, the colony's only newspaper, reported the following on March 4, 1756:

> "Public notice is hereby given that the first of the Pacquet boats provided and established, at Falmouth in England, for carrying on a regular monthly correspondence between Great Britain and his Majesties several colonies on the Continent of North America, arrived at New York on the third, and will stay no longer than 20 days, from that time, unless his Majesty's Service absolutely require it.
> Letters and Pacquets for England or other parts of Europe, will be taken in at the several Post Offices on this Continent. Those taken in at the offices distant from New York, will be forwarded either by post, and from thence to London, whence they will be sent to the respective places they are directed to.
> The full postage from New York to London of all

(o-15) Letter of O-4 courtesy Maryland Historical Society. Gilmore Papers, Ms.387.1.

Whitehall, Nov.r 4.th 1755.

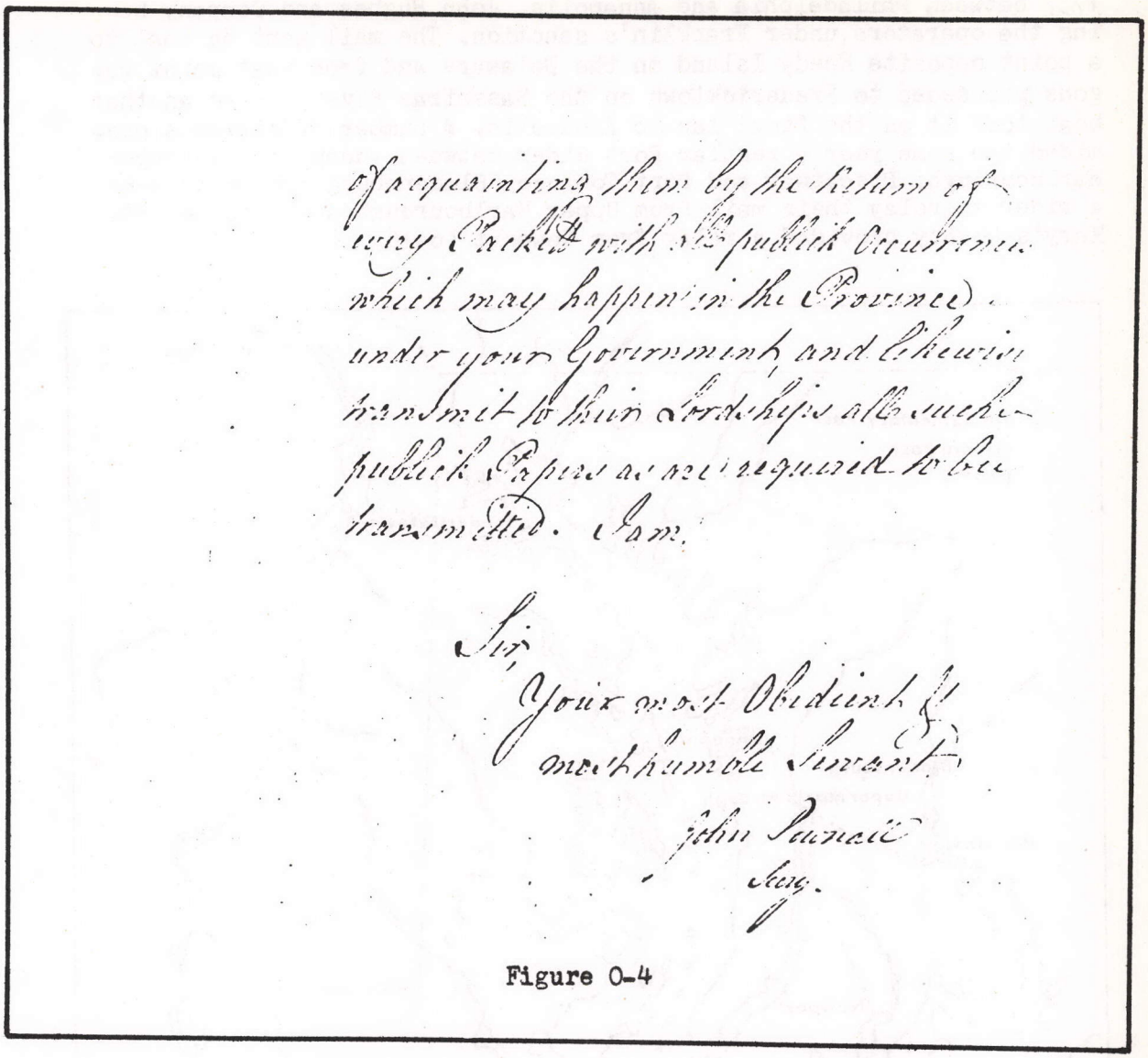
Md. Hist. Soc. Gilman Papers Vol II

Sir,

The Post Master General having, in Obedience to His Majesty's Commands provided Vessels for the carrying on a regular Monthly Correspondence with His Majesty's American Colonies, I am directed by the Lords Commiss.rs for Trade and Plantations to acquaint you therewith, and that the first of these Vessels will be dispatched for the Continent on the 15.th of this Month, to go and return between Falmouth and New York, in which the first Vessel is to remain twenty Days; And as it is of great Importance to His Majesty's Service that their Lordships should have frequent and certain Intelligence of the true State of all His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America, their Lordships desire that you will not fail of

Horatio Sharpe Esq.r
Lt. Gov.r of Maryland.

Figure O-4



of acquainting them by the return of every Packet with the publick occurrences which may happen in the Province under your Government, and likewise transmit to their Lordships all such publick Papers as are required to be transmitted. I am

Sir,

Your most Obedient &
most humble Servant

John Pownall
Secy.

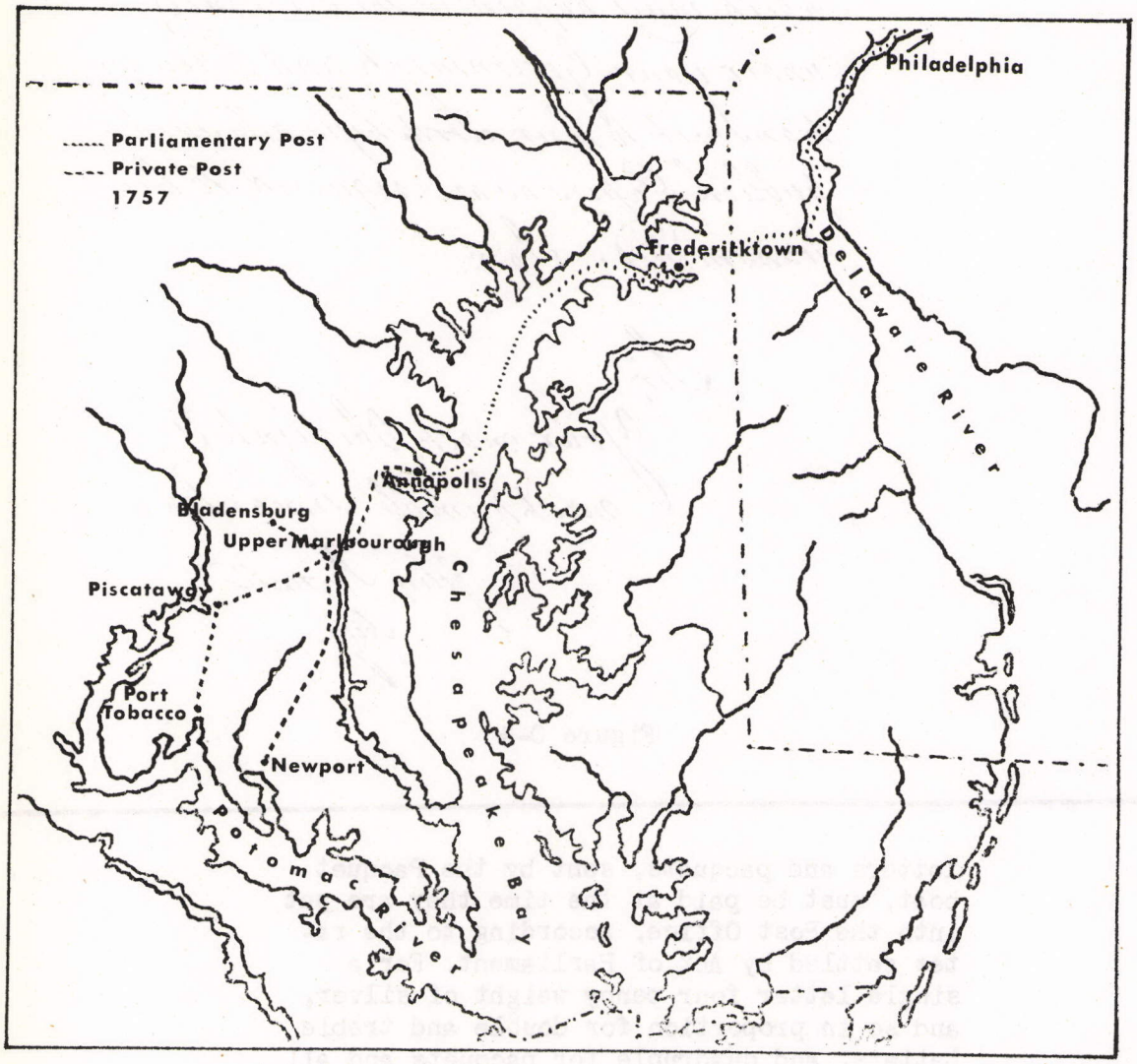
Figure O-4

letters and pacquets, sent by the Pacquet boat, must be paid at the time they are put into the Post Office, according to the rates settled by Act of Parliament. For a single letter four penny weight of silver, and so in proportion for double and treble Letters, and quadruple for pacquets and all such as are put into the several Post Offices on this Continent, distance from New York, must over and above the rates paid from New York to London, pay the full inland postage to New York, without which they cannot be forwarded.

By command of the Postmaster General

William Franklin, Comptroller."

For the first time a line of stage boats and wagons was set up in 1757 between Philadelphia and Annapolis, John Hughes and Company being the operators under Franklin's sanction. The mail went bu boat to a point opposite Reedy Island on the Delaware and from that point wagons proceeded to Fredericktown on the Sassafras River, where another boat took it on the final lap to Annapolis. A number of citizens provided the same year a regular Post Rider between Annapolis and Upper Marlbourough, Piscatway and Port Tobacco. Bladensburg residents sent a rider to relay their mail from Upper Marlbourough and those of St. Mary's County provided a relay from Newport (o-16).

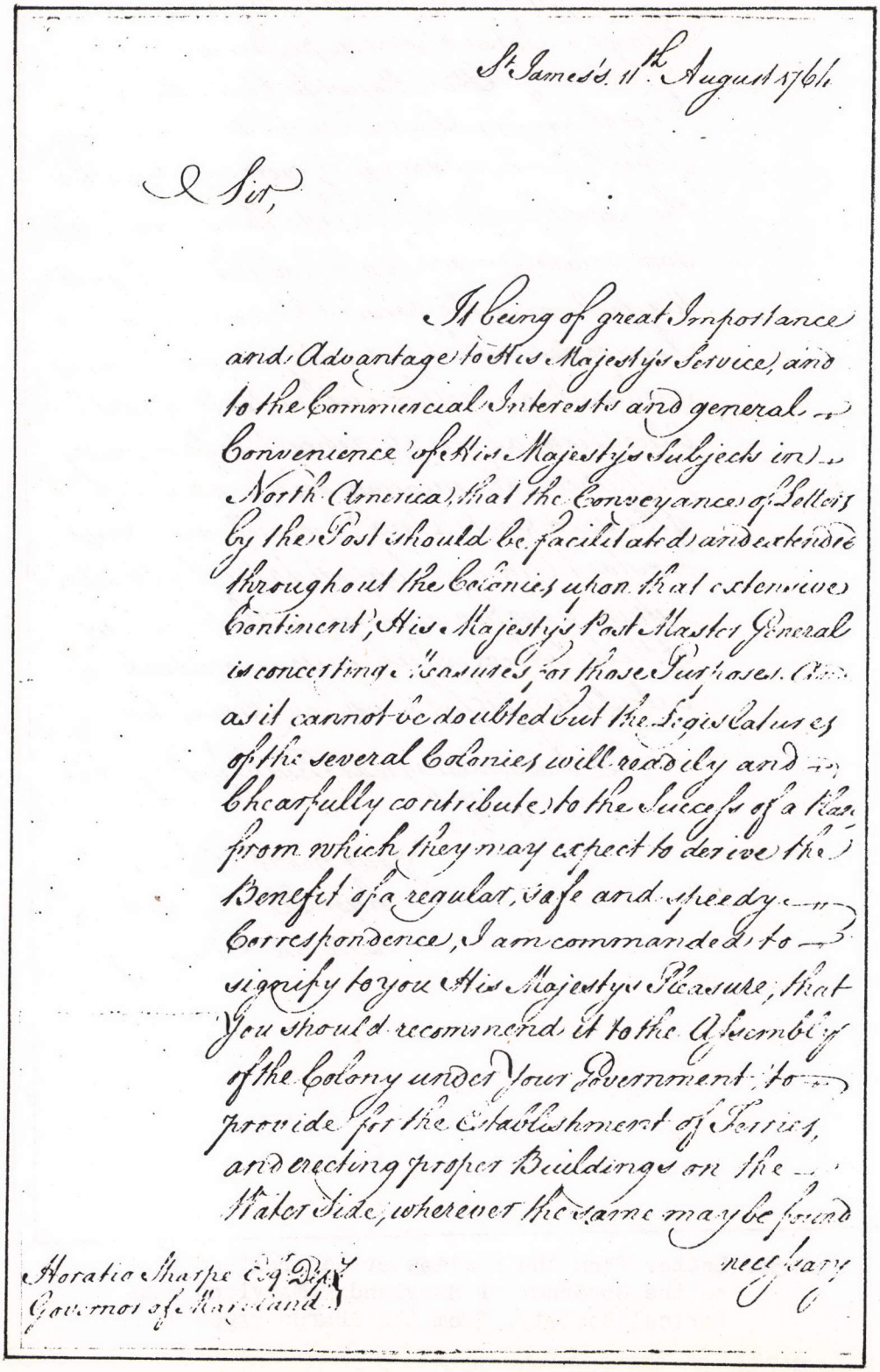


Postal Routes 1757.

Gradually other post offices began to appear along the main overland road from Philadelphia to Annapolis. The little town of Baltimore felt the need for a post office of some sort. It was established in 1751 by

(o-16) Avery McBee in the Baltimore Sun Paper, September 1, 1926.

public subscription. When Benjamin Franklin and John Foxcroft published their schedule of postal rates in 1763 (See figure B-5) Baltimore was not on the list of parliamentary post offices.



St James's 11th August 1764

Sir,

It being of great Importance and Advantage to His Majesty's Service, and to the Commercial Interests and general Convenience of His Majesty's Subjects in North America, that the Conveyance of Letters by the Post should be facilitated and extended throughout the Colonies upon that extensive Continent; His Majesty's Post Master General is concerting Measures for those Purposes. And as it cannot be doubted but the Legislatures of the several Colonies will readily and chearfully contribute to the Success of a Plan from which they may expect to derive the Benefit of a regular, safe and speedy Correspondence, I am commanded to signify to you His Majesty's Pleasure, that You should recommend it to the Assembly of the Colony under Your Government, to provide for the Establishment of Ferries, and erecting proper Buildings on the Water Side, wherever the same may be found necessary

Horatio Sharpe Esq
Governor of Maryland

Figure O-5

necessary, that the Posts may meet with no Delays or Interruptions in passing.

His Majesty's Post Master General having also represented that a Map of the Province under your Government, with the present Course of the Posts throughout the same, clearly marked out, would be of great Use to Him, in the present Undertaking; — I am to desire that You will procure & transmit such a Map, together with a State of such Alterations as You apprehend to be wanting for the better Regulation and Improvement of the said Posts. And You will give Your constant Aid and Support to the Post Masters within Your Government, in the Execution of their Office, which is so immediately calculated for the Publick Benefit.

I am, with great Truth & Regard,

Sir

Your most Obedient
humble Servant
Dunk Halifax

O-5a. Letter from the Postmaster General's office to the Governor of Maryland. (Maryland Historical Society, from the Sharpe Papers).

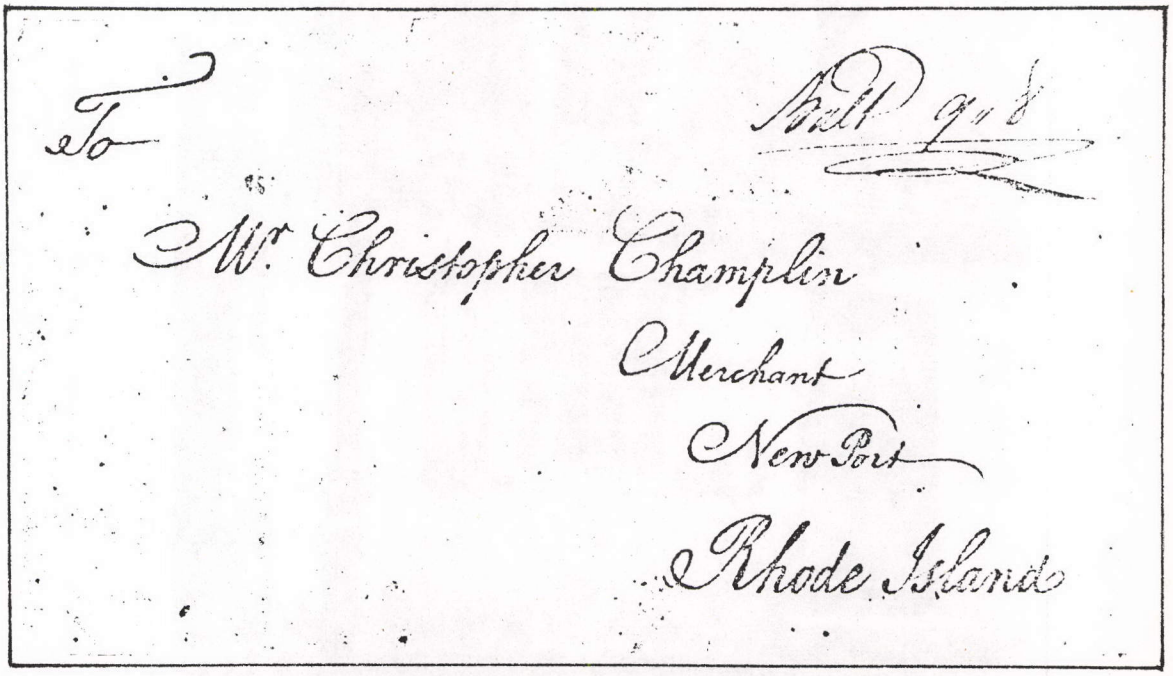
In 1764 the colonies were all invited by the Postmaster General in a letter dated St. James's 11th August to "contribute to a plan, from which they may expect to derive the benefit of a regular, safe and speedy correspondence", among other improvements by establishing ferries across the rivers (figure O-5). Governor Horatio Sharpe in a letter from Annapolis of October 20, 1664, stated with some pride "that ferries are already established on every river in this province where the roads cross them and that attendance is constantly given at them so that there is no danger of the riders being detained at such ferries." With his reply he submitted a list of routes from Annapolis "to the several parts of that province where it might be proper to settle Post-Offices. They covered practically the entire Maryland area.

"In that part of Maryland," the Governor wrote, "which lies on the West side of the Chesapeake Bay Post Offices may be kept at the following places:

> ... At Baltimore Town which lies Northwest of Annapolis on the high road to York in Pennsylvania and also to Philadelphia being distant from Annapolis 30 miles."

And thus in 1765 Baltimore's name appeared on the new "Table of Port". But Susquehanna. Joppa, Patapsco, all located on that road, had earlier birth rights, and so had Marlbourough.

The oldest letter mailed from Baltimore that carries a town marking in manuscript, which a researcher for this Project has been able to find, is shown in Prt II, figure Md 5. It was addressed to Newport, R.I. and dated May 12, 1766. Early postmasters often were uncertain in their

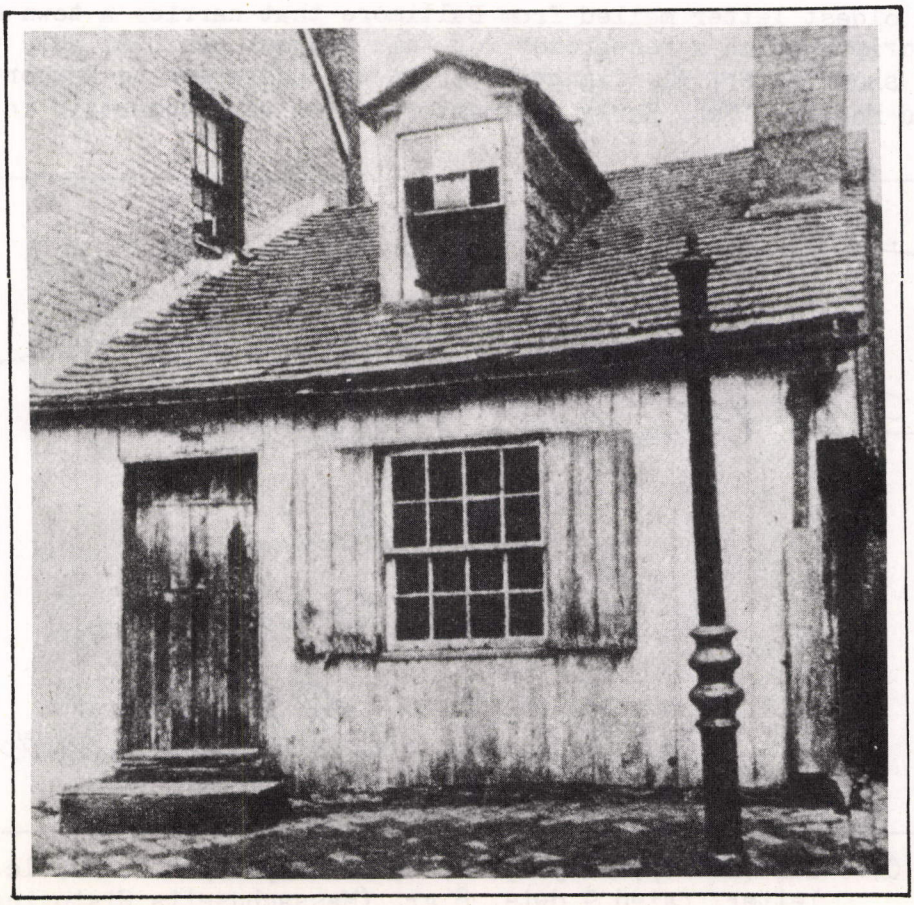


O-6. Balt(imore), July 15, 1766, to Newport, R.I. Double letter, rated 9 dwts. 8 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society, Witmore Collection of Rhode Island Commerce).

rating the outgoing mail. This letter is an example. Its addressee was obliged to pay the local equivalent of 5 dwts, and 8 grs. of silver. However, since the distance between the two towns was 409 miles, the rate called for was 1 shilling, 2 pence, or 4 dwts. and 8 grs., according to the rate schedule of 1765. Two months later a double letter was mailed from Baltimore with the same destination (figure 0-6) and charged 9 dwts. and 8 grs, which was the correct amount.

Early in 1772 the Baltimore post office used its first handstamp. During the almost 17 years preceding Maryland's joining the Union of American States ten different varieties of hand-stamped town markings have been found and are on display in Part II, a diversity of designs which was only surpassed by the New York post office. The cover of figure MD 9 (Part II) is a representative of the provisional Congress Post, William Goddard's creation, during its short life.

The building in which Baltimore's first post office was located is shown in figure 0-7, though the picture has been taken at a much later date. It stood at the beginning of the old Joppa road, within a few yards of the ancient bridge crossing Jones' Fall. Originally it had been used as a country store, whence all trafic with the north would arrive and depart. It was the most natural point at which correspondence might be entrusted to the store keeper for transportation to other provinces.



0-7. Baltimore's first Post Office.

Even in that early day provision was made for letters which might be brought to the store when it had been closed for the day, or on the Sabath, and there still remained the aperture made through one of the structure's logs, sililar to the slot in an ordinary letter box of today, though which a letter found its way to the store keeper.

An interesting anecdote about this office has survived, which illustrates one of the hazards to which early pieces of mail were exposed.

Many years after Baltimore had found a better place for its post office this building was occupied by the Campbell family. One night when Mrs. Campbell was alone in the house with only her infant for company, her husband being on a journey, she was greatly scared by a strange noise. She told Mr. Campbell of her experience, and he, although laughing at her fears, made a search through the house. Coming across a loose board it was taken off when behind it a long shelf, divided up into small receptacles, was found, containing many old letters and some newspapers antedating 1775, musty and decayed. It can be assumed that they belonged to people who could not be found in town or never called for them. The teller of this story did not reveal what had been the origin of the noise which set off the course of these events.

Aitken's General American Register and Calendar of 1774 printed a schedule of departures and arrivals of the mail in Maryland as far as the connections with Philadelphia are concerned. It reads as follows:

"The Time of the POST's leaving Philadelphia, and his Arrival at each Post-Office and Stage, till he comes to Annapolis; and his return back.

Sets out from Philadelphia at 12 o'clock on Tuesdays.

Arrives at Chester	4 P.M.	
at Wilmington	9	ditto
at Christiana-Bridge,*	6 A.M.	Wednesday
at Head of Elk,*	9	ditto
at Charlestown,	12 M	ditto
at Susquehannah,*	4 P.M.	ditto
at Bush-Town,	9	ditto ditto
at White Horse,*	8 A.M.	Thursday
at Baltimore,	12 M.	ditto
at Patapsco Ferry,*	8 P.M.	ditto
at Annapolis,	12 M.	Friday

R E T U R N

Leaves Annapolis	7 P.M.	Friday
at Patapsco,	8 A.M.	Saturday
at Baltimore,	9	ditto
at White Horse,	4 P.M.	
at Bush-Town,	8	ditto
at Susquehanna,	4 A.M.	Sunday
at Charlestown,	9	ditto
at Head of Elk,	1 P.M.	
at Christiania-Bridge,	4	ditto
at Wilmington,	6	ditto
at Chester,	6 A.M.	Monday
at Philadelphia.	10	ditto

* Those marked are Stages, not Post Offices."

The same Register and Calendar for 1774 printed details about the New York Post, the Lancaster Post and the Eastern Maryland Shore Post, giving readers a complete schedule of the Maryland postal services.

> "The Eastern Shore IMaryland) Post leaves Philadelphia at 3 o'-clock P.M. on thursday - arrives at Chester at 7 o'clock, same afternoon, - arrives at Newcastle at 10 o'clock, A.M. Friday, - at Frederick-Town at 8 o'clock, A.M. Saturday, - at Chester-Town at 10 o'clock, - at Talbot at 8 o'clock A.M., Monday, from Talbot at 10 o'clock A.M. same day, - at Chester-Town at 9 o'-clock A.M.; Tuesday, - at Frederick-Town at 4 o'clock P.M., - at Newcastle at 11 o'c;ock, A.M., Wednesday, - at Chester at 7 o'-clock, P.M. same day, - at Philadelphia at 9 o'clock A.M.Thursday."

On August 30, 1773, a man moved to Baltimore, who was going to play an important role in the history of the American post. His name was William Giles Goddard. Soon after his arrival he established the first Newspaper in town, the Maryland Journal. Prior to that time it was customary to receive newspapers from and send advertisements to either Annapolis or Philadelphia. It is now difficult to conceive that Baltimore could have been so dependent upon Annapolis.

Conditions in the colonies being what they were Goddard saw the need and began to develop plans to set in motion an independent postal service outside the control of the British. His first move was to secure a private post rider. On August 28, 1773 his paper carried the following advertisement:

> "An active faithful man, who can write a tolerable hand, and keep a fair account, and is otherwise well qualified to ride a private post or carrier, between this town and Philadelphia, once a week, and is willing to undertake the service immediately, is requested to apply, without delay, to the printer hereof."

Goddard was successful in securing a post rider for the Maryland Journal, Vol. 1, No.14, November 13, 1773, announced:

> "A post rider will be speedily established by the printer of this paper, to set out from hence every Thursday afternoon, for Philadelphia, and to return hither the Tuesday evening following."

In the Maryland Journal of July 2, 1774 Goddard laid out in great detail the plans for his "Constitutional Post". It was reprinted word for word in the Maryland Gazette on July 28, 1774 in Annapolis. Thus the two Maryland newspapers and their editors showed their interest in the establishment of a new postal system completely free from the British.

If the following article, which appeared in the Maryland Journal of July 16, 1774, and was reprinted by the Maryland Gazette, expressed

the feelings of the people in Baltimore and Annapolis on this important matter it is clear that they were ready to accept Goddard's revolutionary ideas.

> "The present deputy post-masters general of North-America are, it appears, in great distress, lest their unconstitutional institution, by which America hath been so long fleeced, should be annihilated by the public spitit and consistent firmness of the people, who, since the infamous dismission of the worthy Dr. FRANKLIN, and the hostile attack of the town and port of Boston, are unalterably determined to support a NEW CONSTITUTIONAL POST-OFFICE, "on the ruins of one that hath for its basis the slavery of America." To frustrate the endeavours of those who are now exerting themselves to bring about an event of this kind, and from a vain hope of reconciling the inhabitants of this place to their parliamentary establishment, which levies a TAX in the very heart of the colonies, and is, in fact, more oppressive and arbitrary than the TEA DUTY, the high and mighty deputies in office, from their own free will, and mere motion, without waiting to be most humbly petitioned, are now about employing an additional post-rider to come hither weekly from Philadelphia, a measure, by the way, the town could not be indulged in, until these generals began to tremble emoluments of their places. This instance, therefore, of their grace and favour being so much out of season, will not, it is presumed, gain them much credit with a discerning people, especially as a New POST-OFFICE will shortly be opened in this and in every considerable commercial town from Virginia to Casco Bay, and riders, of the most un exceptionable characters, be set agoing with the PROVINCIAL MAILS, when letters, &c. will be carried, with the utmost safety, much cheaper than the ministerial prices of a Foxcroft and a Finlay. This much it is thought necessary to mention at this time. On the return of a particular agent, who is just setting ooff for Virginia, the public will have further intelligence of the state of the enterprise in question, which the friends of freedom and their country wish to see compleated by the first of September next, that being the time appointed for the meeting of the GRAND CONGRESS at Philadelphia - a body that cannot, with any degree of consistency or safety, intrust or encourage the tools of those who have forged our chains, and are striving to rule us with a rod of iron."

The proceedings of the Maryland Legislature, noted in Volume XL, page 404, underscore this feeling:

> "As to what you say upon this article and have said upon so many other occasions of this governemnt having no right to levy any money without law .... postage for letters carried by the public post all which duties and imposts are laid on by the parliament of Great Britain without having or requiring the assent of the people of this province.
>
> Sam Ogle"

It is very evident that the Colonial Post as a public utility practically ended with the dismissal of Franklin on January 3, 1774. For a very brief period during the early days of the struggle for independence there were two posts functioning in Maryland. The Parliamentary system, headed by John Foxcroft and Hugh Finlay as deputy postmasters general in New York, and Goddard's newly organized Constitutional Post.

As soon as it was perceived by the Constitutional Congress that it was necessary to repudiate royal authority, the importance of establishing an efficient postal system became apparent.. At the meeting of the second congress, the Continental Congress made its first definite effort to incorporate the Post Office in the governmental scope. According to its Journals the minutes of July 26, 1775 read as follows:

> "Agreeable to the order of yesterday, the Congress resumed the consideration of the report of the committee on the Post Office which being debated by paragraphs was agreed to as follows:
>
> That a Postmaster General be appointed for the United Colonies, who shall hold his office in Philadelphia, and shall be allowed a salary of 1,000 dollars yearly for himself, and 340 dollars yearly for a Secretary and Comptroller, with power to appoint such and so many deputies as to him may seem proper and necessary.
>
> That a line of posts be appointed under the direction of the Postmaster General, from Falmouth in New England to Savannah in Georgia, with as many cross roads as he may think fit." (o-17)

Thus a new system came into being for carrying the mails. Instead of riders taking long routes, there were shorter relays which resulted in increased efficiency and decreases of lapses in time of delivery. When Goddard's "Constitutional Postal Service" was superseded by Congressional action Franklin recognized the worth of the Marylander who had stepped into a serious breach and appointed him Surveyor of Post Roads.

The Provincial Congress of Maryland, sitting at Baltimore, on December 5, 1775 resolved not to permit the Parliamentary Post to pass through the province of Maryland. The Independent Post was opened at Annapolis on the same day. The Resolution read as follows:

(o-17) Harry M. Konwiser: Colonial and Revolutionary Posts. (Richmond, 1931). p. 49.

"Resolved that the Parliamentary Post be not permitted, or suffered to travel in or pass through this province, with any mail, package or letters; and the several committees of observation are requested and directed to see this resolution strictly observed and executed. This is to be published in the Maryland Gazette."

The British postmaster in New York, though completely incapacitated in his postal functions by the inroads both Goddard's organization and the Congressional action had made into his territory, loudly protested Maryland's measures. The Pennsylvania Gazette printed the following statement issued by Foxcroft's secretary:

"Whereas the Provincial Convention at Annapolis, has passed a Resolve 'That the Parliamentary Post (as they are pleased to term it) shall not be permitted or suffered to travel in, or pass through that Province with any mail or packages", and in consequence of that Resolve, have taken his Majesty's mail from the Post Office at Baltimore with the letters contained therein; the Committee at Philadelphia having also taken the mail oontaining all the last Packet letters to the Southward, opened many of them, to the great hurt of the individuals, and signified to the Post Master their intention of stopping all other for the future; and others of his Majesty's mail having been taken and obstructed, notice is hereby given to the public, that the Deputy Post Master General is obliged for the present, to stop all the posts. They are also hereby desired to take notice, that for the safety of the letters coming by the next or any further packet they will be kept on board, and the names of those who shall have letters will be advertised, that they may either apply for them themselves, or write to their friends in this city to pick them up. An order in writing from the person to whom any letter may be directed, will be necessary.

Francis Dashwood, Sect."

When Franklin resigned his post as Postmaster General, because his deplomatic duties took him to France, he was succeeded by his son in law, Richard Bache, which so incensed Goddaard, who was regarded as the logical successor, that he resigned in disgust. Miss Mary Goddard, his sister, who had been appointed postmistress of Baltimore, retained her position and was to continue to serve for fidteen years. She was the first postmistress of any large city in America and established a Baltimore delivery service in 1784.

Benjamin Franklin's department ledger accounts, written in his own hand, have survived. The earliest entries in this book are dated January 5, 1776. The following post offices in Maryland and their first

dates mentioned in the ledgers have been abstracted from the copy that is owned by the Maryland Historical Society (o-18):

Head of Elk	April 8, 1776
Charlestown	January 5, 1776
Harford	April 4, 1776
Baltimore	January 5, 1776
Annapolis	January 6, 1776
Upper Marlborough	January 5, 1776
Bladensburg	January 5, 1776
Georgetown (Potomack)	January 5, 1776
Georgetown (Eastern shore)	January 5, 1776
Chestertown	January 5, 1776
Talbot	July 18, 1776
Queenstown	January 5, 1776.

The amount of postal business transacted by the above post offices was listed in sterling values:

	1776	1777
Harford	4.18.6	10.--.8
Baltimore	155.11.8	414.18.1
Annapolis	18. 9.1	67.17.3
Marlborough	20.11.1	19.15.-
Bladensburg	12.16.8	23. 1.2
Georgetown	2. 3.3	14.12.3

During the period of the American Revolution the postal service was often interupted by the military conflict, but it was never suspended. There werea number of postal routes covered by post riders and there was a growing number of post ofiices in the state. The Continental Congress sought to help keep the mail moving by passing a resolution on May 12, 1777 as follows:

> "Resolved,
>
> That all post masters, post riders, and persons immediately concerned in conducting the business of the Post Office, ought to be exempted from all military duties; and that it be recommended to the Legislatures of the different states, to exempt such persons accordingly.
>
> Cha. Thompson, Sect."

On May 13, 1777 the following letter was sent to the Governor of Maryland as a result of the above resolution:

> "Philadelphia, May 13, 1777.
>
> May it please your Excellency,
>
> Congress having directed that a copy of their Resolve of yesterday relating to the Post Office should be transmitted to the Legislature of each of the United States, I take the liberty of enclosing one to

---

(o-18) Box 1814.

to your Excellency, and requesting that it may be laid before the Assembly of the state of Maryland at the first session after the receipt of it.

I am your Excellency's Most
obedient and very humble
servant

Eben. Hazard
Surveyor General of the
Post Office."

It is no wonder that under the circumstances problems continued to develop. As an example the followng is noted in the Journal of Correspondence of the Council of Maryland, 1781-82, pp. 150-51, Vol. XLVIII:

(Council to Ebenezer Hazard, Esq. - Post Master General.)

"The Post from Philadelphia seldom arrives at this place (Annapolis) until after two o'clock and very frequently not till after three, and as he constantly goes out at four, the commercial people here, as well as others, often experience great inconveniences from his irregularity. We therefore take the liberty to request that you will give such direction in this matter as you may judge proper. We should be glad that the post could always remain in this city, at least four hours, as we are some times disappointed in forwarding dispatches of consequences, by his going out so soon after he arrives."

On September 22, 1789 the United States postal system was adopted by an Act of Congress.

P. The Posts in Canada to 1776

Susan M. McDonald.

The long tradition of an unguarded border and more than a century and one half of peaceful friendship, though remarkable in themselves, have tended to stress the separate identities of the United States and Canada and their individual sovereignty. This emphasis has obscured the fact that they were once not just geographic, but political partners. Although the association of Canada with the thirteen established British colonies as a potential fourteenth colony was brief, it was crucial in the development of the Canadian postal system. The impetus given the rudimentary postal service in Canada by the genius of Benjamin Franklin and by the dedication and resourcefulness of his deputy, Hugh Finlay, determined the course of its growth for many succeeding decades.

The country of Canada won by British arms in 1759 was, of course, different in many important ways from the colonies to the south and these differences were factors in the adaptation to local needs of the system introduced by Franklin. It was a land of vast, undefined wilderness, with the chief settlements strung along the shores of the lower St. Lawrence. The inhabitants were French in nationality, language, laws and customs, and Catholic in religion. The main source of wealth was the export of fur - the line of trading posts established by trappers and coureurs de bois stretched to Lake Superior and southwest to the Illinois Country. The land's enormous agricultural, mineral, timber, and marine potential was scarcely touched in a commercial sense before the conquest (1). The general population, although limited in educational opportunities, was not as illiterate as frequently described. They did not, however, have much occasion to use their reading and writing skills (2).

Knowledge of whatever postal services existed under the French regime is fragmentary and poorly documented. Though letters were exchanged between various localities, and correspondence maintained with France, no organized public postal service was established. In the early years, as was common elsewhere, letters were dispatched privately by a traveller or ship's captain. There is evidence that in the late 17th century a Portuguese named Dasilva was paid to carry letters between Quebec and Montreal. In 1705 he was appointed official carrier of government messages between the two cities. Private letters were also carried at a tax of 10 sols. After Dasilva's death in 1717 his son-in-law, Jean Moran, took over the service for at least 10 years. The trip was accomplished by canoe in summer and by sled or snowshoes in winter. When the river was frozen urgent messages often went by experienced skaters at astonishing speeds (3).

(1) Raymond Douville and Jaques Casanova: Daily Life in Early Canada (1968). pp. 167-77.
(2) Ibid., pp. 202-3.
(3) Ibid., pp. 189-90; Frank Campbell: Canada Postal History (1958), pp. 4-5; William Smith: History of the Post Office in British North America (1920), pp. 41-2.

A few letters from the French period have survived - some as early as 1687 - but none, as far as I am aware, bears any postal markings showing either origin or rate. Probably the greatest contribution during French control was the development of a serviceable road between Quebec and Montreal and of a system of post houses for the transportation of travellers, operated by the maitres de poste. There were 27 such post houses on the road about 7 miles apart. The road, restored and improved under the direction of Jean-Eustache Lanouiller de Boisclerc, was begun in 1729. Construction occupied several years (4). Even when completed the road had many faults and was not popular with travellers, but it did provide a nucleus on which Hugh Finlay could organize mail transmission.

On September 13, 1759, Quebec was captured by the British in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham, which would prove to be the decisive engagement between the French and British for possession of New France. The struggle continued nearly a year until the surrender of Montreal. A British military government was in control from September 1760, with governors at Quebec, Three Rivers, and Montreal, until civil government was restored in August 1764. Thereafter a governor was in charge at Quebec and a military commandant at Montreal. Officially the new province was called Quebec, but its popular name was Canada (5).

The orderly benefits of peace and the advantages of civil administration was anticipated in the case of the post office. A postal service had been operating a year by the time civil government was restored. Indeed, provisions were made to transport letters during military control.

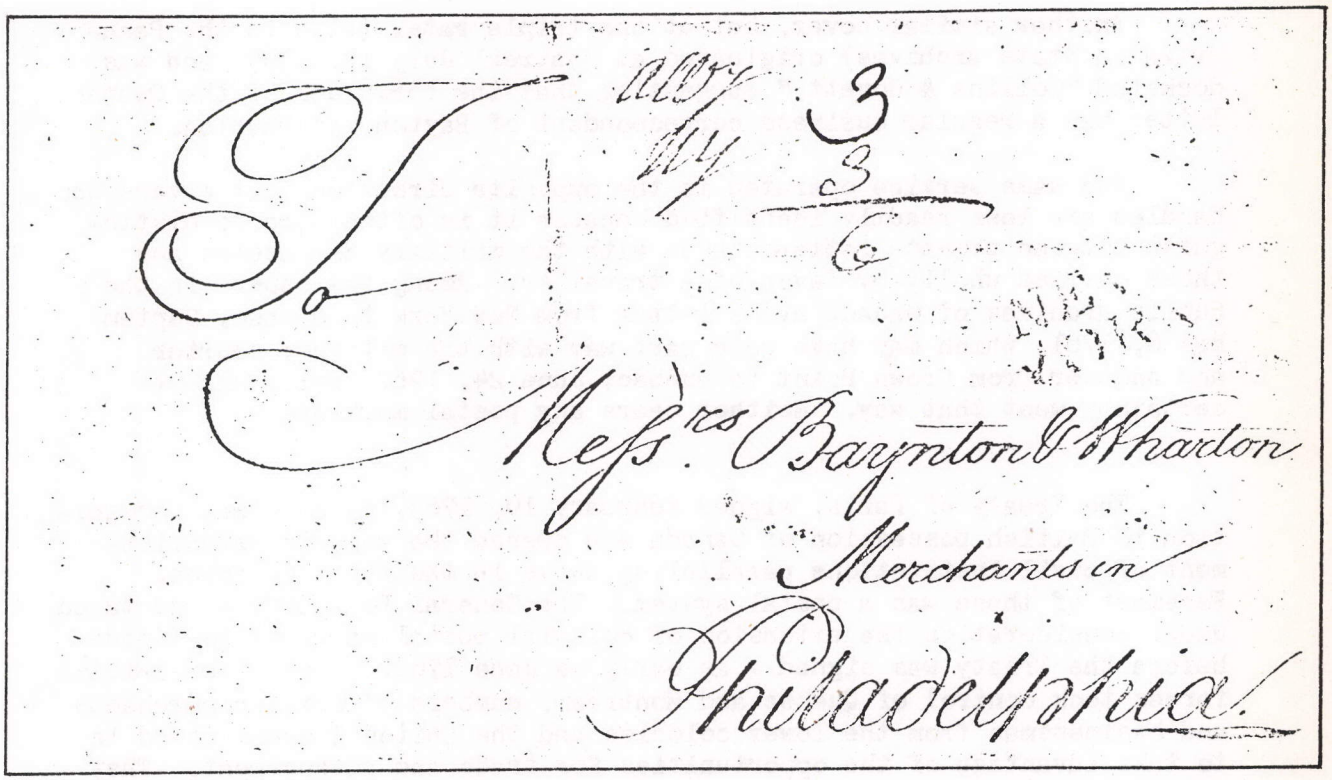
A courier system was set up early in the military government period and functioned as a post in linking the cities of Canada with the established postal service in the colonies to the south. The same system probably also carried dispatches between Canadian towns. Its operation was described by Benjamin Franklin in a letter from Philadelphia to Anthony Todd, secretary of the Post Office at London, on April 14, 1763. The letter refers back to actions taken before Franklin left England in August 1762. The papers and letters mentioned from Colden, Murray, and Gage have not been located.

> "You may possibly remember that a little before I left England, a Complaint of the Merchants of Quebec concerning the Difficulty and Uncertainty of Correspondence there, was communicated to the Postmaster General by Governor Murray. When it was consider'd at the Board, I propos'd dispatching a special Messenger from New York with all the Canada Letters, immediately after the Arrival of every Packet, till it should be found convenient to establish a regular Post. This being approv'd of, I sent orders accordingly to Mr. Colden, directing him withal to apply to General Amherst for Orders to the Commanding Officers at the several Military Posts on the

(4) W. E. D. Halliday, "Development of Canada's Post Office." Linn's Weekly Stamp News (June 14, 1965), p. 1; Smith, pp. 41-2. For a detailed account of transportation in 17th century Canada, see Douville and Casanova, pp. 178-89.

(5) Stephen Leacock, Montreal, Seaport and City (1942), pp. 106-7.

Route, to assist and forward the Messenger, as he was to go thro ' a wild unsettled Country. On my Arrival here, I wrote to Mr. Colden to know what had been done in the affair and receiv'd the Answer and Papers which I enclose. You will observe that both in Governor Murray's and Genl. Gage's Letters Mention is made of the high Charge of Postage; which being settled by the Act of Parliament in Proportion to Distances, we apprehend it not in our Power here to abate. I cannot on the whole but be of Opinion with General Amherst, that while the Commander in chief continues to send Expresses with the Officers Letters whenever a Packet arrives, nd permits those Expresses to carry the Merchants Letters, a Post is not so necessary; But whenever that Practice is discontinued, I should think it adviseable to establish a Post, tho' the Expence should for some time exceed the Produce of the Letters; as the Facility and Regularity of Correspondence increases Commerce, and of course increases Correspondence and multiplies the Number of Letters; so that being carried on steadily for some Time, the Posts would become profitable to the Office." (6).



P-1. Quebec, November 26, 1761, to Philadelphia. Via "Alby" and "NY." Rated 6 dwts. Brown 24 x 12 NEW YORK. (Pennsylvania State Archives)

(6) The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (1960), X. 252-3. Quoted by permission of Yale University Library.

The manner in which such military expresses were expedited is suggested by the wording of a document in the Public Archives of Canada. It is a pass dated November 2, 1763, issued at Quebec by Governor Murray to allow a Lt.Phillips to pass "from hence by way of the Lakes to New York" and instructing officers at the forts and posts on the route "to forward him with the utmost Expedition being charged with my Dispatches for the Commander in chief." (PAC, RG 4, A1, vol. 2, p. 566)

The route travelled was along the ancient natural pathway formed by the Hudson River, Lakes George and Champlain (and their connecting waterways) and the Richelieu River to the St. Lawrence. Most of the route was by water and it was guarded by posts and forts at frequent intervals.

Some letters which must have been conveyed by military courier have survived. They do not show any postal markings applied in Canada. One such cover is shown in Figure P-1. It is datelined Quebec, November 26, 1761, and is endorsed on the reverse "Montral, rec'd & forwarded by your Friend Wm Govett." It may have been conveyed privately from Quebec to Montreal and entrusted to the military courier there. In any case, no charge was made from Quebec to Albany or, at least, none appears on the letter. At Albany it was turned over to the public post and rated at 6 dwts. from Albany to Philadelphia as a single letter.

Another similar cover, but at the triple rate, (also in the Pennsylvania State Archives) originated at Montreal July 13, 1763, and was docketed "Collins & Govett," suggesting that the forwarder of the Quebec letter was a regular business correspondent of Bayton and Wharton.

The same service operated in the opposite direction, but covers so handled are less readily identified because it is often hard to distinguish between private letters taken with the military dispatches and those carried wholly by favor of a traveller. Among the papers in the Public Archives of Canada are a letter from New York to Quebec, September 8, 1761, which may have gone part way with the military courier and another from Crown Point to Quebec, June 24, 1762, which almost certainly went that way. Neither bears any postal markings.

The Treaty of Paris, signed February 10, 1763, gave formal recognition to British possession of Canada and opened the way for establishment of civil institutions paralleling those in the other colonies. Foremost of these was a postal system. The General Post Office had taken under consideration the extension of colonial postal services to Canada before the Treaty was signed - as early as June 1762. Soon after British forces took control of Quebec and Montreal, numbers of British merchants and businessmen from the lower colonies and the United Kingdom moved in to take advantage of the opportunities for trade and advancement. They were a mixed lot, some sharp rogues (the Fanaticks) without ethics, others gentlemen with irreproachable motives and conduct. They pressed the home government hard for improvements in communications, as may be seen in a letter from Todd to Franklin and Foxcroft, dated March 12, 1763 (the last of three letters with this date). The letter from Murray, the memorial of the merchants, the Franklin letter of June 1762, and Todd's letter of January 8, referred to below, have not been found. Todd wrote:

"Inclosed I send you, by Command of His Majesty's Post-Master General, the Copy of a Letter just received from General Murray Governor of Quebec; as likewise the Copy of a Memorial inclosed therein from the British Merchants residing in That Government; by which they plainly appear to labour under many difficulties for the want of a safe and Speedy Conveyance of Letters; also that they are detained, Lost, and opened on the Road, with great Prejudice to their Concerns.

The Postmaster General do therefore wish, as there appears by the said Memorial and other Informations they have received, to be already a Number of His Majesty's Subjects settled in Trade and Business at Quebec, that you might find it practicable to establish a regular Post between That Government and New York, which it is presumed here, according to a Letter from Mr. Franklin to The Post-Master General in June 1762, may be already set on foot, by way of Albany and Montreal.

Upon This Occasion I am commanded to put you again in Mind of Mr. Finlay, whom The PostMaster General, by my Letter of the 8th of January last, proposed to you as a proper person to be Postmaster of Quebec, and who intends to sail from Glasgow about the 15 Instant, with a Recommendation from The Post Master General, to the favour and protection of General Murray, you will therefore not fail to appoint the said Mr. Finlay immediately upon his arrival at Quebec." (7)

Hugh Finlay was a Scot who had emigrated to Canada soon after the conquest, and had entered business at Quebec. He had apparently returned to Britain and was about to leave again for Canada when Todd wrote. Franklin's response to the recommendation of Finlay in Todd's January 8 letter is contained in the April 14, 1763, letter previously noted:

"In the meantime, the Appointment of a Postmaster at Quebeck, to receive and deliver the Letters that may come there by Expresses or by Sea, and to forward such as are sent abroad, will be very proper; and as soon as I meet Mr. Foxcroft, which I hope will be in a few Days, we shall pay due regard to what you write concerning Mr. Hugh Finlay, every the least Intimation of the Pleasure of the Postmaster General, being a Law to us." (8).

Later, after receiving Todd's letter of March 12, 1763, Franklin and Foxcroft answered from New Jersey on June 10:

"As soon as we have settled the Business of the Office here, we shall proceed to New York, where we Expect to be in a few Days, and shall, agreable to the pleasure of the Post-Master General, signify'd to us by you, use

(7) Franklin Papers, X, 223-4. Quoted by permission of Yale University Library.
(8) Ibid., X, 253. Quoted by permission of Yale University Library.

> our best Endeavours to Establish a Regular Post between that place and Canada, which we hope may be effected during 8 Months of the Year, if not for the whole. We have not yet heard of the Arrival of Mr. Finlay at Quebec, but have made out a Commision, appointing him Postmaster there." (9).

Finlay's commission as postmaster was evidently issued on June 10, 1763. The commission itself has not been found but a certificate of the same date attesting to Finlay's appointnent as Postmaster of Quebec and signed by Franklin and Foxcroft survives in the possession of the Maine Historical Society.

At this date Franklin and Foxcroft were just starting their inspection trip through the northern portion of the postal system (New Jersey, New York, and New England) lasting until November 5, 1763. Many misconceptions and errors about places visited and activities undertaken on this journey - some wholly anachronistic - have through repetition gained the status of accepted fact. One such mistaken belief is that Franklin journeyed to Quebec and there met Hugh Finlay.

> "Benjamin Franklin took no such trip in 1763 or 1764, and the only time he was ever in Canada was in 1776 when he was one of the commissioners sent by Congress to try to persuade the French inhabitants to support the Revolutionary cause. So far as is known, he and Finlay never met personally." (10).

Careful study of the dates involved, Franklin's later recapitulation of his travels, his estimate of the total mileage, the accounts of his expenses, and other evidence prove that Franklin could not have made the purported trip to Quebec in the ascribed time period.

Nevertheless the story has been perpetuated by nearly every writer on Canadian postal history since the publication of William Smith's History of the Post Office in British North America in 1920. The story does not, however, seem to have originated with William Smith, though he invested it with circumstantial detail. It appears in brief form in A. D. Smith's Development of the Rates of Postage, published two years earlier. The latter is the earliest reference I have found to Franklin's alleged trip to Quebec. It is not mentioned in William Smith's 1916 article in the American Historical Review. Both writers may have derived the tale from another source or drawn an unfounded inference from the same item.

William Smith cites as authority for his statement a memorandum in the G. P. O. Treasury Letter-Book, 1760-71. The entire memorandum is reproduced in Volume XI, pages 36-41, of the Yale edition of the Franklin Papers. It was probably written chiefly by Todd. Dated January 28, 1764, and directed to the Lords of the Treasury from the Postmaster General, it relates to postal operations in North America and reflects the reports

(9) Franklin Papers, X, 279. Quoted by permission of Yale University Library.

(10) Ibid., X, 280, editorial note. Quoted bypermission of Yale University Press.

and correspondence of Franklin and Foxcroft with Todd. Nowhere does the memorandum mention the alleged Quebec trip, though a careless reading of the first sentence might foster the erroneous and unjustified conclusion that the survey extended farther north than it actually did. The sentence reads: "The beginning of last summer Mr. Franklin and Mr. Foxcroft, Deputy PostMaster General for North-America, undertook a Survey, which was proposed to extend at least, through the whole present Post Roads, in order to examine every where into the state and Management of the several Post Offices. . . ." (11). If this is the source used by both Smiths, it does not support their categorical statements.

The concluding paragraph of this valuable memorandum is concerned with the posts between New York and Quebec and Montreal. It accurately describes conditions in the early months of service and the drawbacks of high rates.

> "The necessity of a regular Post between New York and Quebec, has been so strongly pressed by General Murray the Governor, and by such a Body of British Merchants residing there, as well as at Montreal, and other intermediate places, that it has been undertaken about once a Month, on the Arrival of eachPacket Boat at New York, except for a part of the Winter Season, at a much greater Charge than the Letters can be expected to produce; especially on Account of the high rate of Postage, for the Governors Gage and Murray have both taken Notice of the legal Postage being so high on Account of the Distance; that in Canada, which is represented to be in a manner destitute of Cash, and in all places where Money is equally scarce, the people will forbear to correspond until they find Occasions, by Friends, Travellers and the like, to send their Letters. . . ." (12).

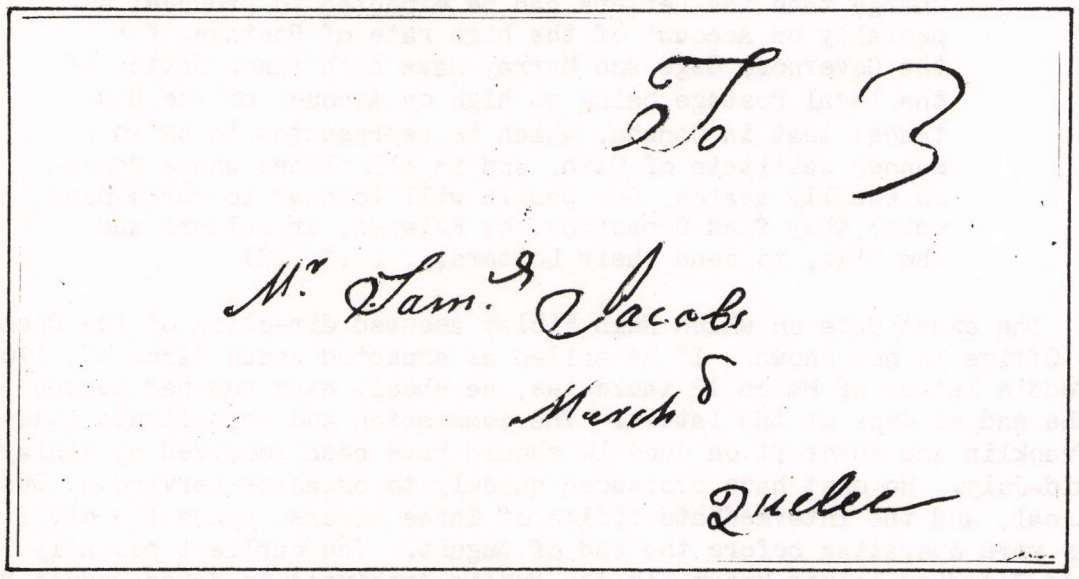
The exact date on which Hugh Fiblay assumed direction of the Quebec Post Office is not known. If he sailed as expected about March 15, 1763, as Todd's letter of March 12 indicates, he should have reached Quebec by the end of June at the latest. The commission and certificate issued by Franklin and Foxcroft on June 10 should have been received by Finlay by mid-July. He must have proceeded quickly to organize service at Quebec, Montreal, and the intermediate office of Three Rivers, since the civil posts were operating before the end of August. The earliest postally marked Canadian letter known (in the Public Archives) is dated August 25, 1763, from Three Rivers. It has no postmark of origin but does show a rate of "3" for transmission to Montreal.

The rate chart prepared by Franklin and Foxcroft for the use of post offices in North America provided rates from New York and Albany to Montreal and Quebec. The chart, based on the Act of 1710, is undated, but presumably was readied in the latter half of 1763, perhaps during or just after the inspection trip. The New York-Montreal rate was 5 dwts.; the New York-Quebec rate 7 dwts.; the postage between Montreal and Quebec 3 dwts. Three Rivers was not included but Finlay evidently applied the

(11) Franklin Papers, XI, 36.
(12) Ibid., XI, 41.

3 dwts. rate there, too. The rates of 2/-, New York to Montreal, and 3/- New York to Quebec, stated by William Smith (p. 43) seem to be a theoretical extension of the 6d per 100 miles rate under the 1710 Act; they are not borne out by the evidence of actual covers. An excellent guide to Canadian postal rates, 1763-1851, developed by the late Grant Glassco, appears on page105 of Robson Lowe's Encyclopaedia of British Empire Postage Stamps, Volume V - North America.

Common practice at Three Rivers for some time was to note the amount due only and not the town name or initials. Several other early letters from Three Rivers in the Public Archives show this method of handling. One, dated November 23, 1763, and addressed to Quebec, is illustrated as Figure P-2. It is very similar to the August 25, 1763, cover mentioned above. The addressee, Samuel Jacobs, was an important merchant who had business places or representatives at Quebec and Montreal and at many of the small towns and villages along the St. Lawrence River. The letter from Aaron Hart, Jacobs' agent at Three Rivers, informs his employer that rats have destroyed some goods in the storeroom, and that he has therefore moved the rest: "on finding them to eat on I Removed them All I could to my Garret, as I never hade Goods thair and do note no Butt Rets may Be thair Beg you will soon taik thame away. . . ." (PAC, MG 19, A2, ser 3.)



P-2. Three Rivers to Quebec,
November 23, 1763. Rated 3 dwts.
(Public Archives of Canada)

The earliest recorded letter from Quebec after the poast office was established is dated September 16, 1763, and is addressed to Philadelphia. It has the notation "pd to Mont 1/," but nothing to indicate its origin at Quebec. The first letter known with an origin postmark is in the Charles P. deVolpi collection. Dated August 29, 1764, it was mailed from Montreal to Quebec and marked "M3" and "10." Another letter from Montreal about three months later is illustrated in Part II as CA 2. It has several remarkable features. The very high charge is a quintuple rate, because of the four pages of enclosures. At the upper left is the note "Rec'd p. postman on Saturd afternoon the 10th of Novr." Even at this early date letters

not promptly picked up at the post office were delivered after a set interval. More details of the carrier service will be discussed later.

The curious contents of the letter caused quite a stir as shown by the file accompanying it in the Archives (13). The file is headed "Papers relative to the Libel inclosed in a letter to James Johnston Novemr 1764." Johnston was foreman of the grand jury. The enclosures form a long scurrilous diatribe against the Governor (Murray) supposedly sent from London. An anonymous covering letter in a different handwriting and signed "Incog" repeats the accusations and suggests that the grand jury look into them. Johnston was properly indignant at this attempt to interfere with the grand jury (the 4/2 postage was an additional insult) and addressed a complaint to the Governor. A reading of the documents to the Council followed on November 18. The Council, under date of November 22, offered a reward of £500 to discover the writer of the "false, feigned, malicious, and infamous Libel" which had been "putt into the publick post office at Montreal by some person or persons unknown."

The chase returned to Montreal and produced the most interesting document from a postal history standpoint, since it reveals mail deposit arrangements at the Montreal post office. This document is the affidavit of the Montreal postmaster, John Thomson, swon before a justice of the peace on November 23:

> "That he did not see any person, or persons at any time put into the Post Office at Montreal a Letter directed to James Johnson Mercht. at Quebec, and that said Letter was received by him into his Office in the ordinary way, & rated by him indifferently wt. the other Letters received into the Slip, which conveys the Letters into a Box in his Office."

This graphic description gives a vivid picture of mail handling at the Montreal post office. The affidavit is the final item in the bundle; presumably the reward and inquiry were in vain and the culprit escaped punishment.

Finlay was strengthening service along the Quebec-Montreal route by utilizing the facilities already in existence. The post houses at regular intervals along the road were operated by post men (maitres de poste) who supplied carriages and horses to convey travellers to the next post house - somewhat like a stage. The use of the term "post men" in contemporary documents to describe the proprietors of the post houses has caused much confusion, since its current meaning is completely different. The men employed to carry mail along the route were known as "post riders" or simply "posts." Finlay used the services of the post men to expedite travel of the post riders along themail route. The post men were independent, however, and not always cooperative. Finlay sought jurisdiction over the post house proprietors and addressed several memorials on this subject to the Governor and Council.

One such memorial to Governor Murray dated February 12, 1766, begins by reminding the Governor of a similar unanswered petition several months before to put the post men between Quebec and Montreal under Finlay's control. It continues:

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(13) Public Archives of Canada, RG 4, A1.

> "The riders employed by the Post Office, bring weekly heavy complaints of the Post Men between this City and Montreal. They refuse to carry the Post at the rate fixed by Your Excellency, and they detain him at their houses, and refuse to forward him with that speed which is absolutely necessary, and required by Act of Parliament; in many places theyprovide him withHorses unfit for service, and to the great prejudice of the Subjects of His Majesty in this Province retard the Publick Courier." (14).

Finlay concludes by renewing his request for jurisdiction over the post men. An attached plan for regulating the post office embodies four main points:

1. Each post man must be licensed; the license to be held subject to good behavior and can be revoked for insubordination.
2. Post men must transport the riders employed by the post office at all times at a fee of seven pence per league; post office orders issued by the postmaster must be obeyed.
3. Post men cannot carry any person without an order signed by the postmaster; persons leaving the province must have a pass from the Secretary's office. Post office to be open 9 am to 1 pm and 3 to 5 pm. A small fee to be charged for each post office order.
4. Post men must drive at the rate of two leagues per hour unless prevented by road conditions.

The February 1766 memorial must have encountered the same indifference as previous ones, because on March 26 Finlay wrote again, this time to James Potts to intercede by presenting a new plan (attached) to the Governor and Council. These documents largely repeat the arguments made earlier, except that Finlay suggests that a superintendant of posts might be desirable and that he would be willing to assume that position. He ends the letter by outlining his plans if he receives a favorable response:

> ". . .before the roads are broke I woud set out, take the names of the Postmen, the distance between each stage, the number of Horses, Carioles, Caleches &c. in the Possession of each, and collect as much information as I possibly coud to guide me in giving orders to each Postman." (PAC, RG 4, A1).

Finlay's frustration continued, however, and he wrote again on December 19, 1766, asking for an answer to his petition. The letter expands on his reasons for wanting to put the post men under post office control:

> ". . . all persons shall be forbid to excercise the Office of postmen excepting those who have a commission from the Post Master of the province, and it is my humble Opinion that they should depend entirely on the Post Office, because on my plan each posthouse will be a branch of the Postoffice, and for the following reason - Letters directed for people living in any of the parishes between Quebec & Montreal, are to be left at the posthouses, nearest the places to which they are directed, to which posthouses, all persons who expect letters will send on the days on which the postboy passes, and will return

(14) Public Archives of Canada, RG 4, A1.

> their answers to the same house to be delivered to the postboy when he calls there on his return, and that postboy by his instructions, will deliver them at the office nearest the places of their delivery. This method will be very beneficial to the publick in its inland correspondance." (PAC, RG 4, A1.)

This appeal must finally have produced action by the Governor and Council, because, in the Quebec Gazette for February 16, 1767, an announcement appeared stating that the Act of Queen Anne (1710) henceforth regulated the post houses in Canada, just as it did those in Britain. Abstracts of the most important provisions of the Act and the corresponding penalties were also printed.

Finlay's increased authority over the post men and his own post riders resulted in smoother operation of postal services, but did not entirely eliminate friction and dissatisfaction. The post men had some complaints of their own, which Finlay enumerated in a document dated May 2, 1769. Under good road conditions any casual driver along the way could carry travellers at a rate undercutting the official post men. Those using the post men's services, equipment, and horses often abused them. Travellers to Montreal might use their own caleches in summer or in winter their own carioles. For these the post men were obligated to furnish horses, "but they look on it as a great hardship to be obliged to do it, especially in winter when they must return on horseback exposed to the severest cold, when they seldom fail of getting their feet or some other parts frostbit." (15).

Finlay recommended that the post men be granted the sole right to carry travellers and that the equipment, lodging, baggage weight, and fees be regulated by ordinance. The route between Quebec and Montreal involved some half dozen ferry crossings and the ferrymen's delays and intransigence were the subject of many complaints, especially from the post office couriers. Finlay proposed that the ferrymen be prohibited by law from delaying or interfering with the post.

In the same document Finlay suggests some improvements in postal services, noting that, when vessels from England arrive at Bic in the lower St. Lawrence, the ship's boat may put passengers ashore at Lance au Coq, Trois Pistoles or Kamouraska. If the letterbag were put ashore at the same time and transported overland, it would arrive at Quebec 8 to 15 days before the ship; the person bringing the bag would be entitled to the postage according to the mileage as compensation.

To encourage establishment of post houses on the route from Pt. Levy to Riviere du Loup, where travel was too limited to support them, Finlay suggested that each post man be granted a free license to sell spiritous liquor as an inducement. He estimated that 12 to 15 post houses would be adequate for the route.

During this period of growth in the internal postal system, service to the south and across the Atlantic was also growing. At first, as noted in the January 28, 1764, memorandum quoted above, service between New York and Montreal and Quebec was monthly - to coincide with the arrival of the packet at New York - except in winter. By late the following

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(15) Public Archives of Canada, RG 4, A1.

summer service was increased to twice monthly, a notice in the Quebec Gazette for August 2, 1764, states, "The Post for New-York sets out on the first & third Monday of every Month."

The December 20, 1764, Quebec Gazette announced a mail for Britain to be made up on the 31st. "All Letters for England must pay the Postage from this Place to New-York, otherwise they cannot be forwarded." A list of unpaid letters addressed to England follows - such lists are a common element in many post office notices. The requirement for prepayment of postage to New York is easily explained; although packet postage could be collected from the addressee, no mechanism existed to collect colonial postage in Britain.

By September 1765, according to a notice in the Quebec Gazette for September 5, the mail for New York was dispatched every fortnight. The public evidently often disregarded the requirement for prepayment; another notice in the Quebec Gazette for December 15, 1766, complains:

> "Notwithstanding the many Advertisements that have been inserted in this Paper, Letters for Britain are often put into this Office without paying the Postage from hence to New-York; also Letters for Persons living on the Road between Quebec and Montreal - All such Letters must remain here until the Postage is paid."

A year later (Quebec Gazette of December 17, 1767) the exhortation is plaintively repeated:

> "Whereas frequent Public Notice has been given, That Letters directed to People livin on the Road between this and Montreal, or other Places where there is no Post-Office, cannot be forwarded except the Postage be paid in with the Letters, notwithstanding which, People still continue in the Error of putting in such Letters, without paying the Postage: This is therefore to give Notice that many Letters, under these Circumstances, now lie in the Office unforwarded."

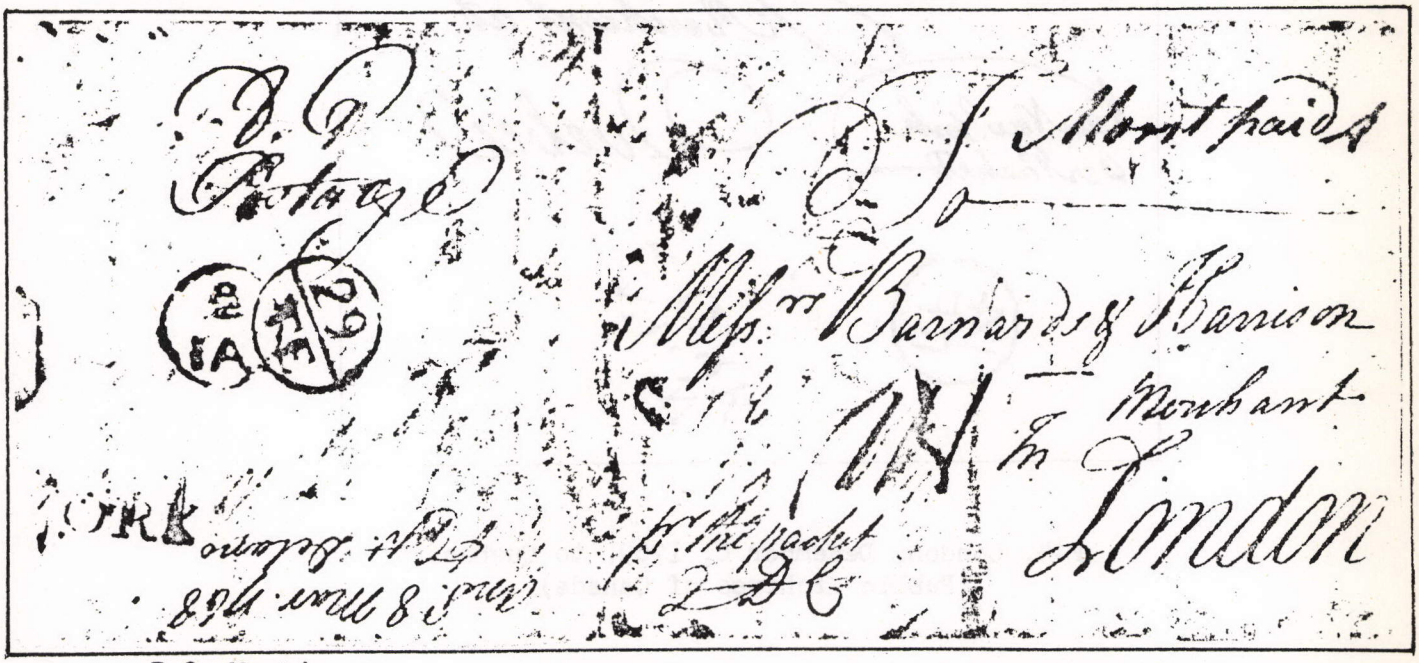
The Quebec Gazette for March 3, 1771, contains an announcement from Alexander Colden, General Post Office, New York, dated January 22, 1771, to the effect that a fifth packet has been added to the New York-Falmouth route and that mails close at New York at midnight on the first Tuesday of each month and are dispatched the next day. Another Colden notice, dated November 11, 1771, (Quebec Gazette, January 30, 1772) states that the post from Canada, under new arrangements, arrives at New York on Tuesday evening; packet mail closes at midnight on the first Wednesday and is dispatched the following day.

A notice in the Quebec Gazette of December 29, 1774, explains the current arrangements for mails to New York:

> "Every Monday at 2 o'clock, a Mail will be made up at this office for New-York, to be forwarded from Montreal on the Wednesday Evening following, by Way of Lake George, and every Thursday as formerly, a New-York

Mail will be made up and dispatch'd from hence at
2 o'clock, and from Montreal on the Saturday Evening
following, by Way of Skenesborough."

The covers shown in Part II as CA 4, CA 7, and CA 9 were transmitted by the Quebec-Montreal-New York route following the St. Lawrence River, Lake Champlain and the Hudson River. The Montreal cover (CA 4) was rated according to the Act of 1710; 5 dwts., Montreal to New York; 3 dwts., New York to Philadelphia. The Quebec letter (CA 7), under the modified rates of 1765, was charged 5 dwts. 8 gr., Quebec to New York, and 2 dwts., New York to Philadelphia. The new rates were available for publication on October 10, 1765, date of proclamation of the Act, which had been passed May 10. Postage on the Quebec-Boston cover (CA 9) was composed of 5 dwts. 8 gr. to New York and 3 dwts. 8 gr., New York to Boston.

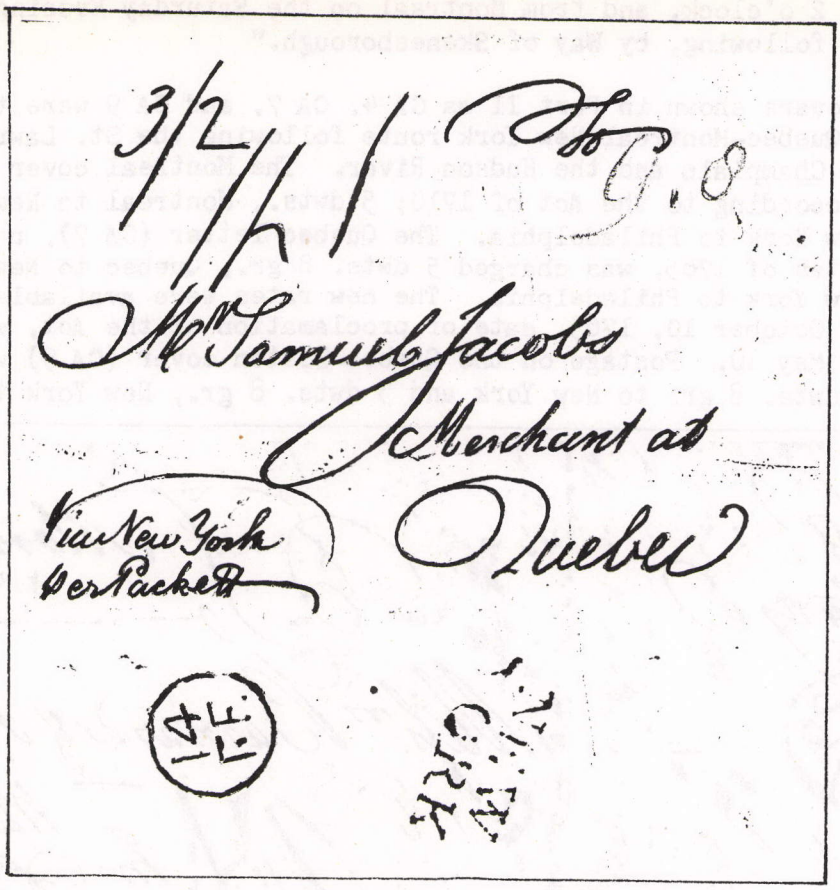


P-3. Mont(real), December 12, 1767, to London, per packet, via NEW/YORK, black 24 x 12, Bishop mark 8/IA, 1768, arrival Bishop mark 29/FE. Prepaid to New York 4 dwts. Packet rate 1 shilling. (Faulstich collection).

A letter addressed overseas in this period is illustrated in Figure P-3. It is datelined Montreal, December 12, 1767. Postage was prepaid to New York as required and was noted "Mont paid 4." One shilling packet postage was collected on receipt in London. On the reverse are a partial strike of a straightline NEW YORK and "8/IA" bishop mark. The letter was in time for the January packet and received a London bishop mark "FE 29."

On letters addressed to Canada from overseas or from the other colonies there was no requirement for prepayment. Usually the entire amount was collect; high charges were common, as exemplified by material in the Public Archives. A triple letter from New York to Quebec on October 2, 1764, was rated 21 dwts. or 6/- local currency due. Even a single letter from Boston to Quebec, August 20, 1763, via New York, cost 12 dwts. to the recipient.

A packet letter from England could also be sent unpaid. The letter in Figure P-4 from London, December 6, 1769, was sent by packet via New



P-4. London, December 6, 1769, to Quebec.
(Public Archives of Canada)

York. The one shilling packet rate, equal to 4 dwts., and the 5 dwts. 8 gr. postage from New York to Quebec totalled 9 dwts. 8 gr. This amounted to 2/4 stg. or 3/2 in local currency. Occasionally letters were entirely prepaid. One from Portsmouth, N.H., to Quebec, December 22, 1771, (Public Archives, RG 4, A 1. was paid in full and postmarked "Pisa Paid 9 dwt. 8 gr." (See Chapter S). Ship letters from overseas were common, 16 grains being charged in addition to regular postage; an interesting example from Edinburgh to Quebec, September 24, 1764, is illustrated on page 70 of the Lowe Encyclopaedia.

Franklin and Foxcroft must have given Finlay considerable independence in the exercise of his office. There seems to have been no further communication between them after Finlay took charge; at least, none is preserved. The memorials and requests made by Finlay were addressed to the civil officers at Quebec, rather than to his superiors at the post office. Probably he had been sent a copy of the instructions issued by Franklin and Hunter in late 1753, as his actions were broadly guided by the principles therein.

Finlay's innovative approach to problems and needs in his postal jurisdiction continued. His use of carriers to deliver mail is well documented. This service was probably generally based on the instructions

issued by Franklin and Hunter, paragraph 9 of which outlines carrier delivery in detail (Franklin Papers, V, 165). Franklin and Foxcroft reported on the carrier system to Todd on September 21, 1764, noting that they had authorized free delivery (Franklin Papers, XI, 346).

The post office notice in the Quebec Gazette for August 2, 1764, establishes that letters were held at the post office only briefly:

> "The Post returns from Montreal every Saturday at 11 o'clock, at whichHour the letters will be delivered out, and Attendance given till two, when those remaining will be delivered to the Penny-Post."

Finlay preferred that patrons call at the post office for their mail; a notice in the July 23, 1767, Quebec Gazette advises:

> "Letters arriving on Wednesdays will be delivered at this Office precisely at Ten o'Clock; none can be sent out by the Runner till Six o'Clock in the Evening. Every Person expecting Letters will be so obliging as to send for them."

Later - perhaps because of increased volume - delivery was deferred until the next day. In the Quebec Gazette, January 3, 1771, the public was notified:

> "All Persons, who expect Letters by the Post, are intreated to send for them to the Office on Wednesdays. Those which may remain uncalled for on the Day of the Courier's Arrival, shall be sent out next Morning, to be delivered by the Runner."

The area served by the post office was steadily expanded. In his memorial of December 19, 1766, Finlay noted that service was lacking in the Sorel River area and suggested that his plan to make each post house a branch of the post office would provide a remedy:

> "This complaint, if my Plan is Judged a good one will be removed, for the Posthouse at Berthier, which is opposite to the mouth of the said River, will be the Postoffice where all letters for these parts will be left, and a Canoe shall be sent over weekly with them to the first posthouse on the other side, where every body that expects letters will send & will return their answers." (PAC, RG 4, A1.).

These ideas were eventually put into practice, as shown by a notice in the Quebec Gazette, January 3, 1771:

> "Such Letters as are to be left at any Place on the Road between Quebec and Three-Rivers, or Three-Rivers and Montreal, cannot be forwarded unless the Postage is paid where they are put in: When thus frank'd they are left with the Masters of the Post-Houses, nearest the Places to which they are directed, and there remain until called for, so that the Country Traders

> and others expecting Letters from Quebec, Montreal or Three-Rivers, know where and on what Days to send for them to the nearest Maitre de Poste, commission'd from this Office."

The establishment of a by-office at Berthier was announced in the Quebec Gazette, January 16, 1772:

> "To prevent Miscarriage of Letters, and to facilitate Correspondence with the Corn-countrys round Berthier and Sorrel, a Bu-Office is established at Berthier."

Detailed times and days for mails to and from Berthier follow. Bids are asked for a post rider to Riviere du Loup.

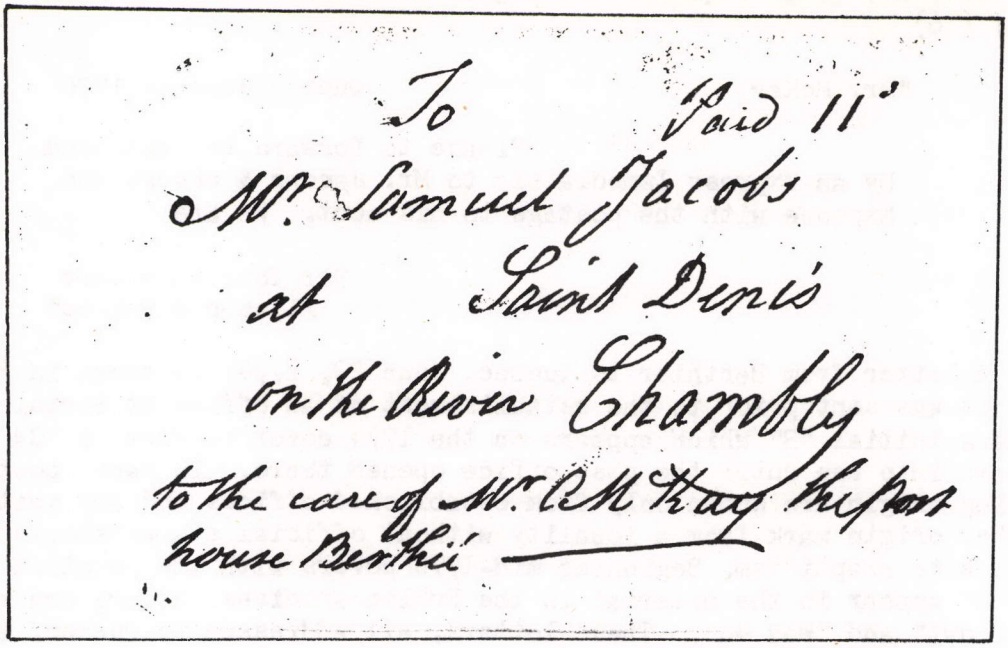
Two weeks later, the information about Berthier was repeated in the Quebec Gazette and the schedule for Riviere du Loup announced:

> "This Day at Twelve o'Clock, the Courier for the Parishes below Quebec, on the south side of the River, as far as the Riviere des Loups, will set out from this Office - Letters for anyPlace between Quebec and the said Riviere des Loups must be put into the Office every other Thursday before Twelve, and paid for at putting in; all Letters addressed to such Persons as do not live on the Post-road, will be left at the Parsonage or Priest's House, nearest the Place of Direction, and all who do not live on the Post-road who may have Letters to send to Quebec, Three Rivers, or Montreal, for any Place on the Continent, or for England, are hereby directed to leave them at the Priest's House, where the Courier will call for them on his Return to Quebec, where he will arrive every other Wednesday Morning."

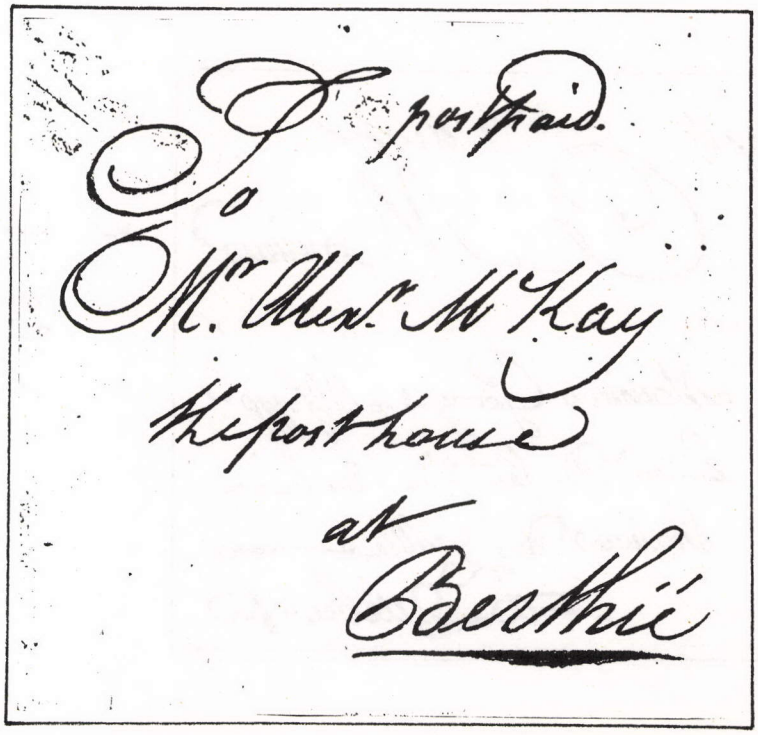
Although designated a by-office, Berthier was now able to collect postage and postmark letters. The office was probably in operation before the end of 1771, the year usually given for its founding.

On August 11, 1774, notification was made in the Quebec Gazette of two posts a week between Quebec and Montreal. "The Post that leaves Quebec on Monday, will arrive at Montreal on Wednesday, and the Post that leaves this on Thursday, will as formerly arrive on Saturday at Montreal. The Post will return from Montreal to this place on Wednesdays and Saturday." In the issue of December 28, 1774, the establishment of offices at Crown Point and Fort Edward (between Montreal and Albany) was announced.

The operation of the post houses as by-offices is illustrated by the letters in Figures P-5, P-6, and P-7. The first originated at Quebec on January 31, 1770, for transmission to St. Denis, but was addressed "to the care of Mr. A. McKay the post house Berthie," and prepaid 11d as required. It is endorsed on the back "Berthier 2d Febry 1770 forwarded to Mr. Fromanteau the 3d Instant by Alexander McKay."



P-5. Quebec to Saint Denis, January 31, 1770, in care of the post house at Berthier. Prepaid 11 d. (Public Archives of Canada).



P-6. Quebec, June 14, 1770 to the post house at Berthier. Postpaid. (Public Archives of Canada).

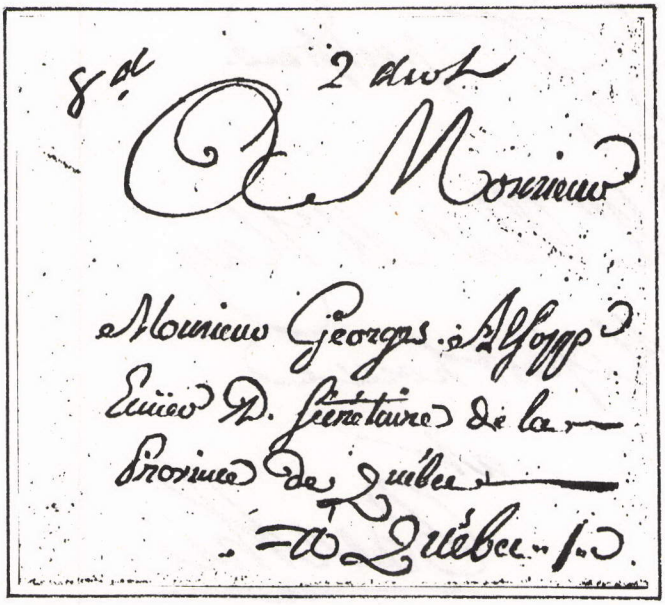
The second example (Figure P-6) from Quebec, June 14, 1770, has the notation "postpaid" without an amount stated and is addressed to Mr. McKay himself, as it requires his urgent attention. The brief letter reads: (16)

"Mr. McKay Quebec June 14 1770

Please to forward the enclosed by an Express Immediately to Mr. Jacobs & charge the Expence with the postage to his acct. We are

Sir Your Hble serv
Allsopp & Welles"

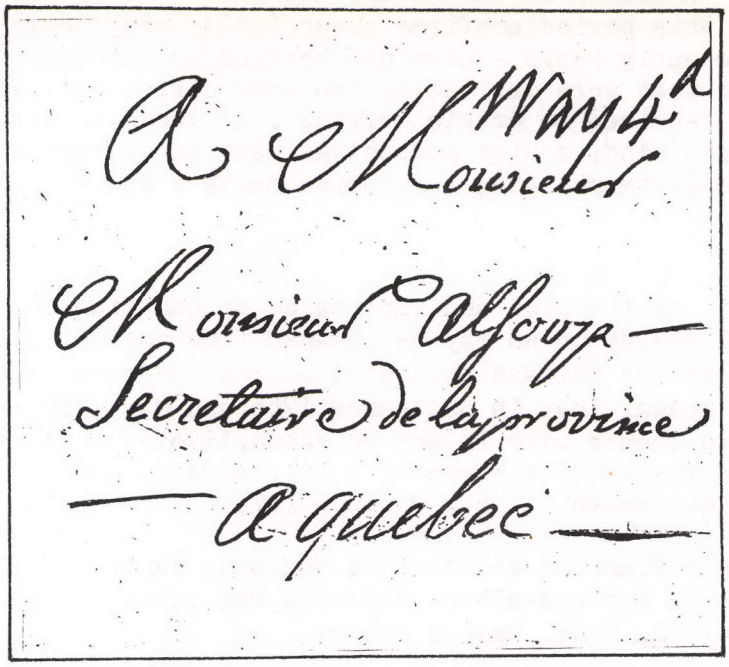
A letter from Berthier to Quebec, June 29, 1770, is shown in Figure P-7. It was sent prior to the establishment of an office at Berthier. The postmark initial "B" which appears on the 1774 cover in Part II, CA 1, did not come into use until the post office opened there. In fact, postmarks denoting origin are known only from established offices and any initial or other origin mark from a locality without official status should be viewed with skepticism. Beginning mid-1770 covers with the notation "Way 8d" appear in the material in the Public Archives. Others are marked "Way 2 dwt" and "Way 4d". These letters, all addressed to Quebec, are among the returns of bailiffs from many villages over a period of several years. Interpretation of the postal charges cannot be certain until the various small towns are accurately located on a map and their distances from Quebec determined. One example is shown as Figure P-8. It is date-lined "de la grande Cote Batiscaut le 15 Juillet 1771."



P-7. Berthier, June 29, 1770, to Quebec. Rated 4 dwts. Local currency 6 d. (Public Archives of Canada).

Postal markings in the period 1763-76 are quite limited; only a few handstamps are known. They are shown in Part II as CA 7, CA 9, and CA 5. The straightline QUEBEC handstamp (CA 7) is known as early as June 1765 and is assumed to have been made on Finlay's instructions. A few scattered

(16) Public Archives of Canada, MG 19, A2 (3).



P-8. "Way 4d" to Quebec, July 15, 1771.
(Public Archives of Canada).

examples have been recorded through 1767; the handstamp apparently then fell into disuse until the late 1770s. Measurements reported vary significantly; more than one instrument may be involved.

The double circle Quebec postmark (CA 9) is seldom recorded before 1780. The type shown here has the month and day set in as part of the device. Later examples have an open center with a bishop mark frequently separately struck in the space. A cover to London dated October 23, 1776, shows the Quebec double circle with a bishop mark struck in the center.

The Montreal handstamp (CA 5) is particularly attractive and interesting as it combines the town initial and the rate. It was obviously intended to speed handling of the commonest item at the Montreal post office - a single letter to Quebec. A handful of examples from 1774 and 1775 are in the Public Archives. I am not aware of any in private hands. In view of the convenience afforded by the device, it is surprising that so few copies exist.

Another handstamp consisting of the name MONTREAL with the date OCTOBER, 15 below has been extensively reported and illustrated in the literature as used in 1774.

The handstruck postmarks may be glamorous and appealing to collectors, but the manuscript markings are actually more representative of the period. Typical examples are shown as CA 1, CA 2, CA 3, CA 4, CA 6, and CA 8 in Part II. The initial "B" was used at Berthier; the Montreal post office used "M," or "Mont" or sometimes the entire name. Quebec marked

only its initial. A search in the Public Archives through volumes of correspondence of this period confirms these facts: many letters - perhaps 50% or more in the early years - were not handled by the post office at all. Many letters that were carried by the post office were marked with the rate only and received no origin markings. Of those letters with a town postmark of any kind, a high percentage have manuscript markings only. Handstamped postmarks - on a relative basis - are the rare exceptions.

Some estimate of the size and importance of Canadian postal operations in the first decade or so may be gleaned from various surviving records. Forms from the Philadelphia post office covering selected months from 1764 to 1767 reveal that in September 1766 and May 1767 the total mail pieces sent to Quebec were 26 and 20 respectively; to Montreal 8 and 6. Comparable figures for Newport, R. I., were 25 and 20; for Boston 120 and 105; for Portsmouth, N. H., 9 and 6 (17).

After Benjamin Franklin returned to England, James Parker, Comptroller of the post office in North America, reported regularly to him. In a letter of September 11, 1766, Parker wrote:

> "The Post-Office at Quebeck seems to turn some Profit to the General Office, when it was thought it would hardly bear its own Expences. There are three Offices in Canada, and all help a little. . . ." (18)

A month later nearly the same statement was repeated (19) and on November 11, 1766, Parker informed Franklin:

> "The Quebeck Post-Offices yield a pretty considerable sum to the Revenue - at least more by far than was expected, and I believe will in all Canada, equal either New-York or Philadelphia, in net proceeds." (20).

Again, on December 15, he mentions the Canada post offices "which of themselves yield to the Revenue above £500 per An. clear of all Charges to the Revenue" (21). Finlay's efficient discharge of his office was resulting in a surprising profit.

Other indications of the success of the Canada post office are found in an old account book of Edward William Gray which is preserved in a large group of family papers in the Public Archives (22). Gray was a substantial merchant at Montreal, and was also deputy provost

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(17) Franklin Papers, XI, 400.
(18) Ibid., XIII, 412. Quoted by permission of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.
(19) Ibid., XIII, 456.
(20) Ibid., XIII, 494. By permission of the American Philosophical Society.
(21) Ibid., XIII, 526. By permission of the American Philosophical Society.
(22) Public Archives of Canada, MG 19, A2 (3).

marshal and postmaster for several years. The records include accounts with Hugh Finlay for much of the period from 1766 to 1776, and accounts with other individuals connected with the post office. The accounts are too extensive and diverse for adequate treatment here and deserve separate detailed analysis, but some excerpts will indicate their interest and value. Not all the entries, of course, are related to post office operations.

Gray's compensation as postmaster of Montreal was 10% of the postal receipts so that the amount received in postage at Montreal was recorded regularly. For example, postage received during the quarter ending January 5, 1767, was £106.4.3; for the succeeding quarter £171.4.3 2/3. The amount usually paid the "Courier who went Express with the pacquet to Quebec" was £3.12.0. These entries, judging by the interval between them, must refer to the mail from New York following the packet's arrival. Also noted are large sums remitted to James Parker to the account of the General Post Office - on August 20, 1768, for example, over £200.

Other pages detail payments to Moses Hazen, Peter Arnold, and Major Philip Skene successively for carrying the New York mail between Montreal and Skenesborough(now Whitehall, N.Y.). Entries in the account of Stephen Moore, then acting postmaster of Quebec, dramatize some of the problems encountered in administration:

"1769		£	s	d
April 18th	To cash paid Francois Vialars for taken the Mail to Berthier, the Quebec Post not arriving in time: where he met Labady the Courier and exchanged Mails with him	1	16	-
	To Cash advanced Labady the Courier which he said was to be charged to your account	1	13	2
May 29	To Cash paid Francs. Vialars for taking the Mail from Europe to Quebec"	5	8	-

Some entries of a more personal nature offer an intriguing glimpse of the intimate lives of individuals. In the fall of 1771, Hugh Finlay's account was charged as follows:

"1771		£	s	d
Aug 13th	For a Clock	3	12	-
Septr 23d	Paid for a pair of Knee Buckles	-	-	9
Octr 5	Paid for 6 Barrels of Apples	4	16	-
12	Paid for 6 pairs black Stockings for Mr. A. Skene	1	7	-
	for a Crape for a Hat Do.	-	4	-
	for a Set of Mourning Buckles Do.	-	4	10
18th	Paid Mr Ainslie for Miss Skenes Expences from Q.	1	1	6
	Paid your Bill on Malcolm Fraser favour of Mr. A.	6	-	-
	for a pair of Shoes for Miss Skene	-	5	6
	for 1# White Wax for Do.	-	4	6

It is rather surprising to learn that the wax cost nearly as much as the shoes it was intended to polish.

Brief mention should be made of postal services in Nova Scotia, although detailed consideration is beyond the scope of this discussion. Nova Scotia came under British control in 1713 and was included in the area for which Franklin and Hunter were responsible. The opening of a post office at Halifax on April 23, 1754, was announced in the Halifax Gazette. There was no overland communication with Canada; overseas mail was sent to New York, sometimes via Boston, to connect with the packet. (23). A letter from Halifax on July 15, 1757, to London "Pr Harriet Pacquet" is illustrated on page 11 of the Postal History of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. This is the earliest known letter under the British Post Office from the area generally understood by the designation British North America.

Some interesting observations on the post office in Nova Scotia are contained in instructions from Franklin and Hunter to James Parker, dated April 22, 1757:

> "10. There is a Post Office in Nova Scotia, under our Direction, but the Officer never sent us any Account. You are to write to him, and acquaint him, that no Account from his Office has ever come to our Hands since he received his Commission, which was about the Beginning of 1754, and desire he would forward to you an Account of his Office from that time to the End of the last Quarter, with all Expedition. Many Letters from different Parts of the Continent are sent to Boston Office for Nova Scotia, and forwarded thither by Sea, no Person appearing in Boston to pay the Postage; so that a good deal of Money, it is thought, arises at present in that Office, while the Army is canton'd in so many different Parts of America. Mr. Hubbard's Accounts will show how much of what has been charg'd to his Office is forwarded to Nova Scotia, and Mr. Colden's will show whether any have been forwarded thither by Sea from New York." (24).

Hubbart had become Baston postmaster in 1756. What response, if any, Parker received from Halifax is not known. The only other reference located is an inconclusive remark in a letter from Parker to Franklin on June 10, 1769, stating that he has tried to follow Foxcroft's instructions and that he has written to Halifax, and sent the commission there, as directed by Foxcroft (25).

The orderly progress of Canadian postal affairs was hampered and finally curtailed as dissension in the other colonies grew to rebellion. By the spring of 1775 deteriorating conditions were straining the links of the Canada post office with the rest of North America, and adversely affecting its ability to function satisfactorily. When fighting broke out at Lexington in April 1775, Finlay was in New York to see Foxcroft

(23) C. M. Jephcott, V. G. Greene, and John H. M. Young, The Postal History of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (1964), pp. 9-12.
(24) Franklin Papers, VII, 196. Quoted by permission of the American Philosophical Society.
(25) Ibid., XVI, 142.

on post office business. He felt it prudent to return to Canada and began the journey along the usual route but was forced to turn back before reaching Albany. Back at New York he took refuge on a sloop-of-war in the harbor, then got passage to Boston and from there returned to Quebec by sea (26).

Meanwhile the sudden, unexpected fall of Ticonderoga on May 10, 1775, encouraged plans to invade and persuade Canada to the revolutionary cause. A force under Brigadier-General Richard Montgomery, General Philip Schuyler's second-in-command, started north from Ticonderoga on August 28, 1775. Later, Schuyler, having taken charge, was forced by ill health to withdraw, and Montgomery resumed command. On November 13, 1775, American forces entered Montreal and occupied it. Two weeks later Montgomery moved on to Quebec to join up with Colonel Benedict Arnold's troops who had just completed a brutal wilderness march. He died there at the year's end in a futile assault. Quebec remainder under siege until early May when relief ships arrived from England and the American forces retreated upriver (27).

The Americans occupying Montreal had some supporters and sympathizers, especially among merchants with British or colonial antecedents, but the Catholic church sternly rejected the invaders and most of the French population reflected this attitude. As Raddall says (p. 44), "The seed of revolt had found a rather cold soil in the St. Lawrence Valley. . . ."

In an effort to enlist Canada in support of the revolution, Congress sent a commission to Montreal in April 1776. The members were Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Chase of Maryland, and Charles Carroll, a Catholic and Maryland landowner. Carroll's brother, a Jesuit priest, accompanied them. They reached Montreal April 30, but achieved little - the moment for persuading Canada to their side had passed. Franklin left on May 11, the others on May 29. The troops followed on June 15, 1776, relinquishing the city to the British (28).

The status of postal services through this period - especially at the Montreal post office during the occupation - presents many questions that cannot be positively answered. Some services were suspended or reduced because of unsettled conditions and harassment of post riders. The route between Montreal and Skenesborough seems to have been abandoned in May 1775. The last entry in Gray's account book referring to the Skenesborough mail, under the account of Major Philip Skene, reads:

			£	s	d
"Dr	1775				
	May 6	To Cash sent him by the Courier Tisson	7	4	-
Cr	1775				
	May 6	To 22 Mails rec'd at the Post Office at Montreal Decr. 12, 1774, to date @ 60/-	66	-	-
	N.B.	The Courier Tisson said that the Rebels took the Money that I sent by him."			

(26) Alvin F. Harlow, Old Post Bags (1928), p. 263.
(27) Thomas H. Raddall, The Path of Destiny (1957), pp. 34-43; Leacock, pp. 122-5. It is interesting to note that some Canadian authorities have not been impressed by the heroics of Arnold's march.
(28) Raddall, pp. 44-52.

As hostilities moved north, postal operations were further curtailed until on November 9, 1775, Finlay, who was at Quebec, wrote that the Montreal courier had been robbed of the mail and that the Quebec courier had avoided ambush by some armed men near Berthier by returning to Quebec. "From this day all postal matters are stayed in this provine." (29).

During the occupation of Montreal by American troops the Congress Post was extended to include Montreal. Exact dates and details are obscure. The fact that George Measam acted as postmaster has been established by a memorial addressed to the Continental Congress by Measam on August 2, 1776, in which he states that Montgomery had recommended that he be entrusted with "the Post-Office for the Province; and that he was honored with a commission from the Postmaster-General for that purpose, and did direct the same, and support it with his own proper moneys, until the American Army was obliged to retreat from thence." (30).

The memorial is accompanied by a letter from Franklin to John Adams attesting to Measam's account and recommending him for a position as superintendant of stores at Ticonderoga. Measam had been a merchant at Montreal for at least ten years, as his signature appears on a petition dated 1765 (Public Archives of Canada).

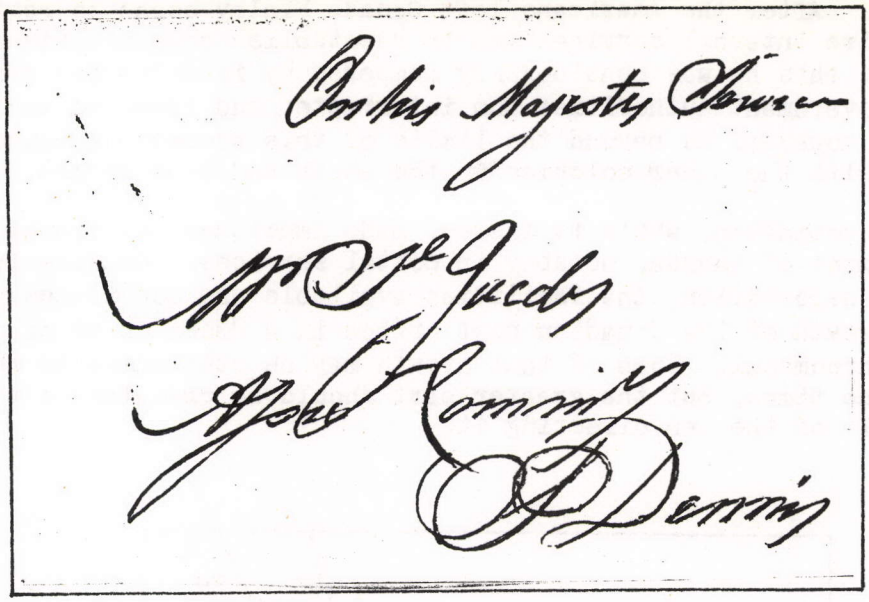
Although the dates of the occupation post office are indefinite, it is possible to determine quite precisely the period during which the authorized British post office at Montreal did not function. The post office closed November 7, 1775, and did not reopen until June 21, 1776. These are the dates given by Edward Gray in accounting on October 31, 1776, to Finlay for postage collected at Montreal and in calculating his compensation as a percentage of the receipts (31).

According to William Smith (p. 66), Franklin prescribed rates of 4 dwts. from New York to Montreal (no change from the Parliamentary rate), and 5 dwts. from New York to Quebec. Since the New York-Quebec service probably never functioned, hat rate is of academic interest only.

Of the very few covers known from Montreal in the occupation period only one shows a postal rate. It is illustrated in Part II, CA 6. Dated at Montreal on March 25, 1776, it is addressed to Richard Varrick at Albany. Varrick was secretary to General Schuyler who, as mentioned earlier, had been compelled by ill health to relinquish command of the invasion forces and return to Albany. The brief letter from William Laing requests Varrick to deliver an enclosed letter to a third party, Alex. MacCulloch. A double rate (the Montreal-Albany single rate was 3 dwts. 8 gr., in force since 1765) was incurred by the enclosure. The wording indicates that the enclosed letter is in answer to one from MacCulloch, but no postally transmitted letters into occupied Montreal have so far been identified.

Another letter from Montreal in this period, dated May 7, 1776, is shown in Figure P-9. It is puzzling because of the endorsement "On

(29) Harlow, p. 263.
(30) American Archives, 5th Series, I, 725.
(31) Public Archives of Canada, MG 19, A2 (3).



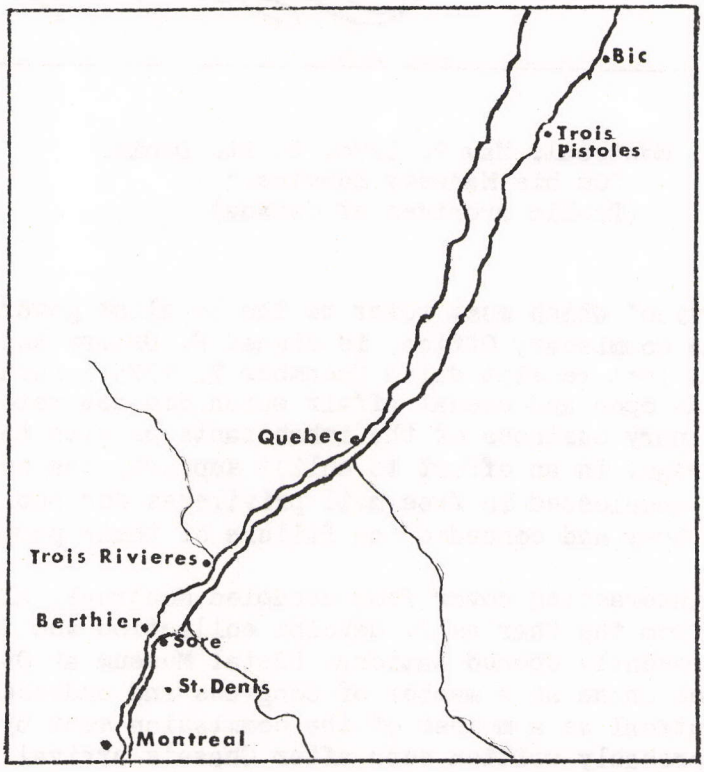
P-9. Montreal, May 7, 1776, to St. Denis.
"On his Majesty Service."
(Public Archives of Canada)

his Majesty Service" which must refer to the loyalist government. The letter, from the Commissary Office, is signed P. Drewry and asks for a duplicate of a lost receipt dated December 7, 1775. Perhaps the occupation was an open and casual affair which did not materially interfere in the ordinary business of the inhabitants or with their traffic with outlying areas. In an effort to enlist support, the occupying forces may have acquiesced in free mail privileges for public officials. Or by this date they had conceded the failure of their purpose.

The most interesting cover from occupied Montreal, although a front only, is from the Charles P. deVolpi collection and is now on display at the recently opened National Postal Museum at Ottawa. It is franked by Samuel Chase as a member of Congress and endorsed "Free." Chase was at Montreal as a member of the commission sent by Congress. The letter was probably written soon after Chase's arrival on April 30. It is addressed to Major General Thomas at the "Camp before Quebec." Thomas, who had led the successful seizure of Dorchester Heights near Boston, had a short time before taken command of the forces besieging Quebec. He replaced General Wooster, who had, in turn, taken over from Benedict Arnold. Arnold had sustained a serious leg wound during the December 31 attempt on Quebec. He was relieved in early April, although the leg was nearly healed by then, and went to Montreal. In early May, as British relief vessels approached Quebec, Thomas abandoned the siege and led the retreat in the direction of Montreal. He died of smallpox at Sorel along the way.

Finlay was caught inside Quebec by the siege and spent the winter immobilized in the city. The regular operation of the post office was in abeyance. After the Americans left Canada Finlay began to restore and reorganize internal services and to reestablish communications with Britain. In this he was considerably hampered by interference from military and government authorities who interrupted and censored the mails. That story, however, is beyond the limits of this account, because Canada's links with the other colonies in the south had been broken.

The association, while it lasted, made important contributions to the development of Canada, notably in postal services. Considering the stage of transportation, the facilities available and conditions present, the growth of the Canadian post office in a dozen or so of years was truly phenomenal. Some of that growth may be attributed to the energy of the times, but the greater part should be credited to the vision and will of the men directing it.



Acknowledgments.

The courteous assistance of personnel at the Public Archives of Canada is much appreciated. I am especially grateful to Charles P. deVolpi for checking the manuscript and making suggestions.

Q. Florida Colonial Mail

Charles F. Meroni

While historians have found a wealth of material to write about in numerous volumes on the history of Florida, there is little or nothing available about Colonial Posts in Florida. However, it is indisputable that in the some 300 years subsequent to the discovery by and landing of Juan Ponce de Leon in Florida, at Easter time, in 1513, that quantities of letters and military reports were carried by ship and courier from to and in Florida. But all conveyance of Colonial mail was apparently effected without the establishment of any regular Post Ofice in Florida.

Up to 1763, St. Augustine was hardly more than a presidip encompassed by missions (q-1). Likewise in 1763 when the British took over Pensacola from Spain, it was only a village of "about 150 huts enclosed within a square stockade and two Bastions at the opposite angles". (q-2)

The humid climate and constant hostilities in Florida, as well as the lack of any suitable archives, were not conducive to the preservation of local mail. On the other hand, any existant outgoing ship mail to the mother countries, Spain, France and England, if kept at all, would quite likely have found repose in foreign and frequently in accessible historical museum records.

Although Florida was previously under Spanish and French flags, for the purpose of this article it suffices to begin the subject here with the ceding of Florida to Great Britain on February 10, 1763. The ensuing British Colonial era was relatively short as in the 1783 Treaty of Paris, Britain ceded Florida back to Spain.

Britain divided Florida into East Florida and West Florida. West Florida included the area south of the 31° north latitude between the Appalachicola and Mississippi Rivers, except New Orleans and the region south of Lake Ponchatrain. The map on the next page shows roughly how Florida was divided in 1763.

The division into West and East Florida not only played a very important part in Florida's subsequent history, but also in early United States postmarks, even up into statehood. Civil government was established in 1767 and a northern boundery of 32°28' was claimed for the western province.

In the American Revolutionary War Spain entered the was on the

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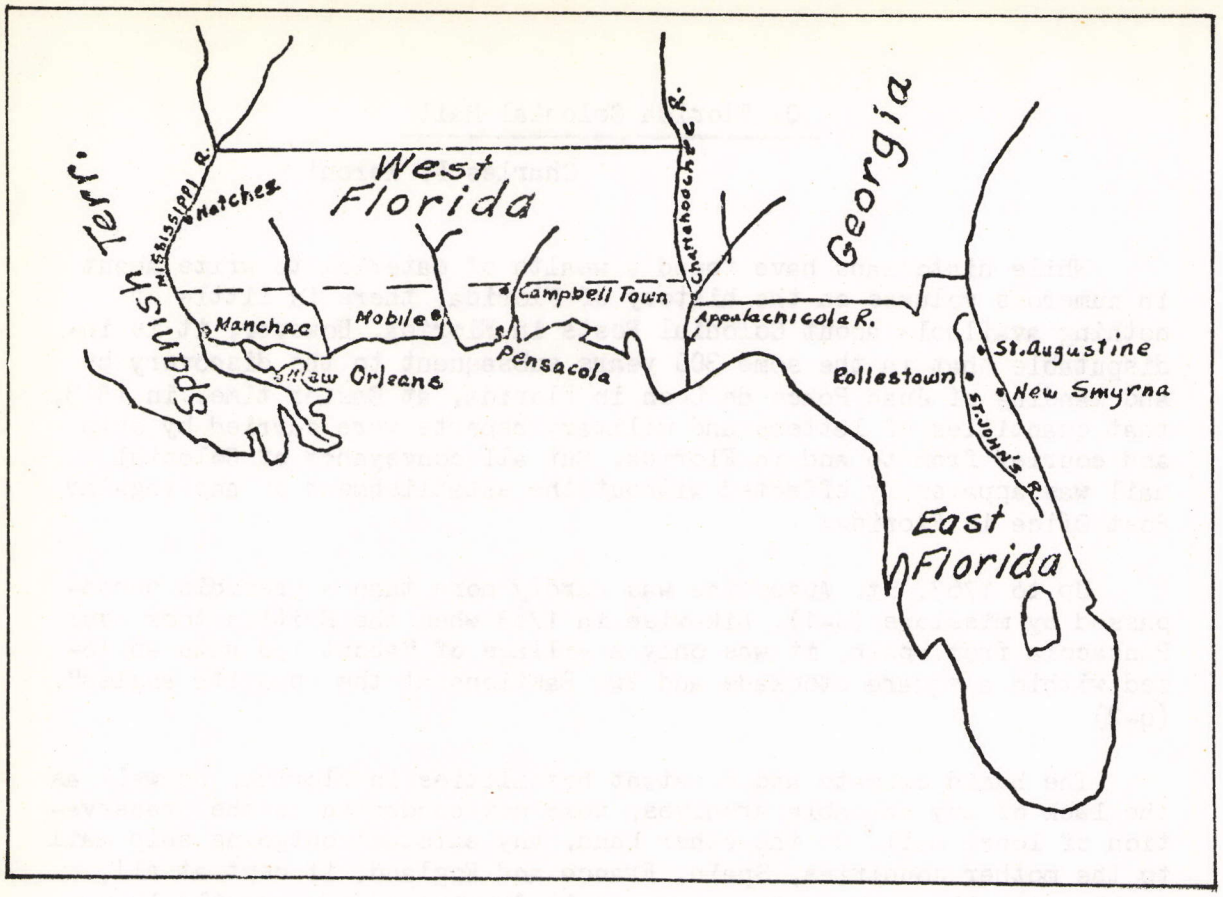
(q-1) Hanna: Florida Land of Change, p. 49.

(q-2) Letter "date lined" Exiled Pensacola September 5, 1763 of British Officer Robert Campbell to the Earl of London with manuscript receipt date "January 15, 1764. London".



Q-1. Florida in 1763

side of the Colonies against Great Britain and captured various posts in Florida, including Pensacola in 1781.

The principal towns of Florida during the Colonial era being St. Augustine and Pensacola, it follows that they would have been the ports of entry and departure of Florida mail. Pensacola, because it had a more accessible harbor, was eventually selected to receive the West Indies packet boat mail of some four ships annually which was increased in 1771 to five. This became a triangular ship service via Jamaica-Pensacola-Charles Town-Jamaica.

Despite the foregoing there does not appear to have been any officially established government post offices in Pensacola, let alone any salaried Postmasters. It has been noted by some historians that in Pensacola, a Collector of Customs, Jacob Blackwell (q-3), could have been designated to handle mail. Any such arrangement with the Collector of Customs might be presumed to be similar to employment of Custom Collectors of other British Colonial towns, such as for example Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Credence is lent to the fact that no separate office of Postmaster was created by there not having been any provision for such office in the government budgets of Flo-

(q-3) Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe: The Colonial Posts in the United States of America 1606-1783 (London, 1967), p. 18.

rida. On the other hand, there does appear to have been specific provision in the budget of West Florida, such for illustration as for the year 1767, for a Collector of Customs.

Prior to the ceding of Spain in 1819 to the United States, Peter Alba had apparently been put in charge of the mail by the Spanish government at Pensacola, among his other duties at the hospital. He had been sent to Havana and returned aboard the Hornet entrusted with the Orders for the Exchange of the East and West Floridas. When the mail was to be delivered that had arrived aboard the Hornet from Havana, the Spaniards were informed they could pick it up at Austin's Tavern. (q-4)

Also in Panton's "Life of Andrew Jackson" letters written from Pensacola about the time of U.S. take-over of Florida in July, 1821, the following unequivocal statement is found:

> "There is no mail. no post office here."

After the ceding of Florida in 1819 to the United States Nicholas Cary in his Pensacola "Floridian" (q-5) publication stated:

> "There is established in this place a post office and regular mail to Claibourne, Alabama, the most convenient point of intersection, with the Eastern, Southern and Northern mails. The Postmaster General, having made the necessary arrangements with his usual promptness and care for the extended usefulness of his department."

Significantly, no reference was made by Nicholas Cary (q-6) to any previous post office. Since he was not only publisher of the Floridian, but also the first United States Territorial Postmaster at Pensacola, it would appear he would have known of any previous Pensacola post office. Instead he referred only to "Austin's Tavern" as a place for the mail. Coffee Houses or taverns had long been a mailing center (q-7). Colonial Surveyor of the post roads Hugh Finlay in his September 13, 1773, Journal (q-8) announced the existence of coffee houses in Florida wherein he stated:

> "Now if a weekly post were here Established it woul'd be proper to advertise it in London Papers for some time, and in the Carolina, Georgia and Florida Coffee Houses to make the publick and especially the London Merchants trading to these parts acquainted with the despatch with which their letters can be conveyed from Charles Town to all parts Southward." (Emphasis ours)

(q-4) Carter's 22 and Pensacola Floridian August 18, 1821.

(q-5) Floridian Vol. 1, No. 1, August 18, 1821, published in Pensacola.

(q-6) Nicholas Cary did not receive his printing press for the Floridian until Agust 10, 1821. (Florida Historical Quarterly XXIII No.2, Oct. 1844).

(q-7) London Coffee Houses Bryant Tellywhite 1963. See titles Mail and Pensacola.

(q-8) On file in Postal History Section of Smithsonian Institution.

It is thus reasonable to conjecture that there were no recognized government post offices during the Colonial period and prior to the 1819 secession of Florida by Spain to the United States.

The first letter I have encountered from British Colonial Florida comprises four pages and a large cover. It is date lined "Exiled Pensacola September 5, 1763 (q-9) and is signed by John Campbell of a British Battalion of 300 men, which troops, according to the letter, were sent from Havana (q-10) by General Heppel for the specific purpose of taking "possession of Pensacola on the coast of Plorida, newly ceded by Treaty". The letter tells of the arrival on August 8th, the disembarking on August 10th, the arrival of Spanish transports sent by Governor General Count Ricla of the Spanish West Indies and the sailing on September 3rd of the Spaniards on the transports for La Vera Cruz. Also Campbell gives a detailed account of Pensacola as place of banished Mexican felons; and the tenor of his letter treats Pensacola as being a foresaken village from which he wants to get away from being "exiled" there.

The cover of the letter is addressed to "The Right Honorable The Earl of London; and while it has no handstamped postmarks does bear a manuscript receipt inscription "R. January 19, 1764, London". Thus the letter was about four and one-half months in transit before getting to its destination.(figure Q-2).

There is also a second letter of Robert Campbell date lined Pensacola Dec. 10, 1763, addressed "My Lord" but is without a cover. In this letter he states he is ordered "to New York to finish the Regimental Accounts". He also asks his Lordship's countenance and efforts to obtain for him twelve months leave of absence.

As there is nothing to indicate the ship routing of these two letters, we can only speculate that they were each carried by Ship Captain or via military dispatch on the first available ship to England.

Now at this time there was obviously no overland route from Pensacola to our original Colonies. In this respect, as late as the Saturday, September 8, 1821, issues of the Floridian, we find the following pertinent remarks as to the lack of an overland route even then.

> "For comparative convenience we cannot complain of our mail establishment. The present mail route, between this place and Washington city is 1136 miles and we had by the last mail dispatches dated 14 August, making the time seventeen days. This is very well for the present, but we may be much better served. It is said there is an old Indian trail from a point on the eastern side of our bay, through the Indian country, to the settlements in Georgia which from calculation

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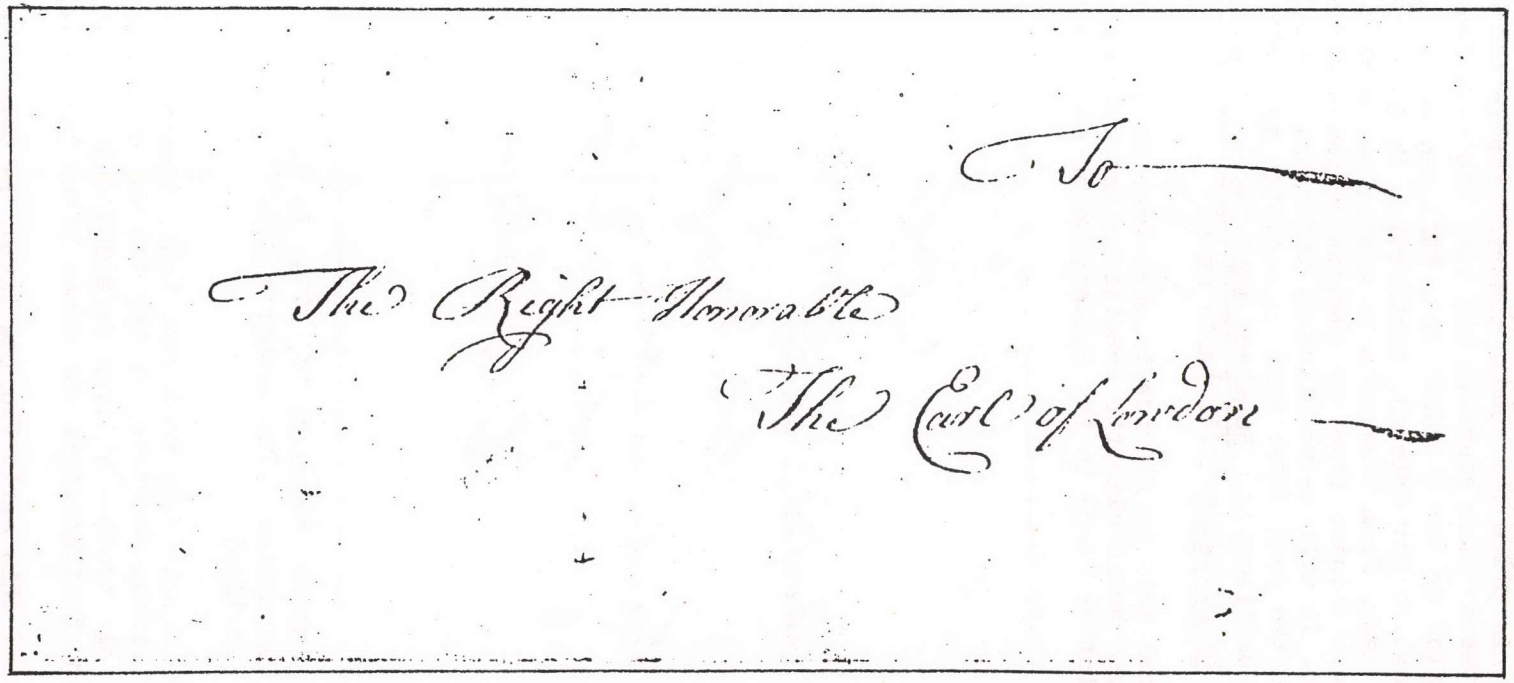
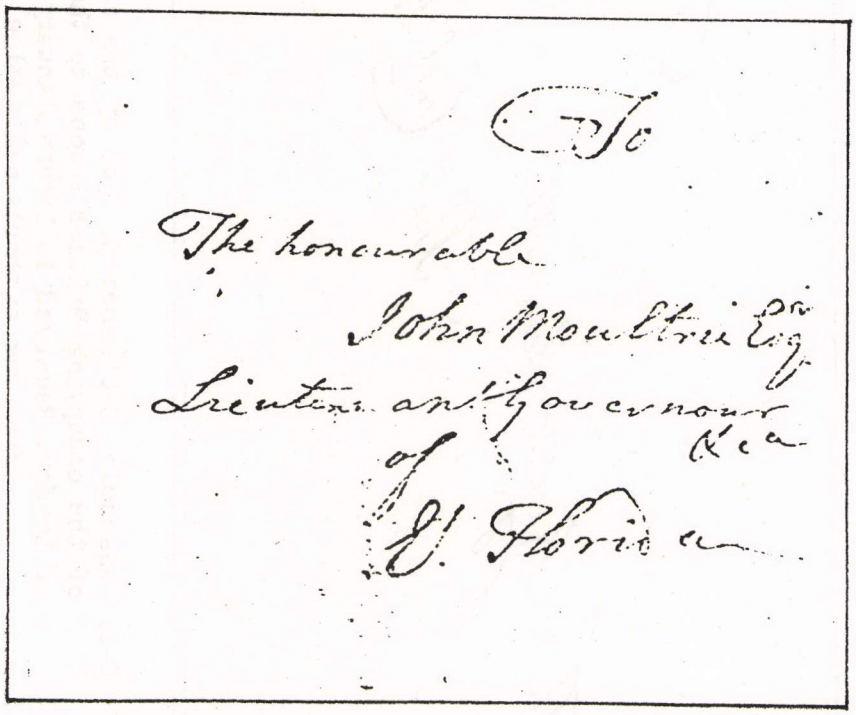
(q-9) In collection of Charles F. Meroni.
(q-10) Possibly of the same British troops who captured Havana in 1762 and later upon restoration, left there in 1763.



Q-2. Pensacola, September 5, 1763 by the commander of the occupying British troops to the Earl of Lowdon. Received in London January 19, 1764. (From the author's collection).

from data from experienced and well informed will reduce the distance from Washington City to 1,000 miles. A good and practicable wagon road may be made so as to expedite by stage route being extended to this place .... under contract for an 100 miles every twenty four hours we may have the mail from Washington on the eleventh day. Mail can now be by steamboat to New Orleans, contracting to and back in one week. From Pensacola to Nashville twenty five days arising from the newness of the Alabama Country. It will be politically important to make it with the post department to send the mail through more expeditiously. Southern mail, will of course always by by water." (Emphasis ours)

Preserved local mail in Florida is much scarcer than ship mail going abroad because humid climatic conditions and sparcity of population. One such letter (Q-3) in the collection of the author is



Q-3. Smyrna, February 14, 1774, to St. Augustine. (The author's Collection).

addressed to The Honorable John Moultrie, Esq., Lieutenant Governor, etc. of E.Florida. Moultrie, during the War of Independence, was in England but his brother William defended Charles Town, S.C. against the British. Fort Moultrie was named after the latter.

The enclosure of this early Florida letter is date lined Smyrna Febr'y 14th 1774, and is signed by two Florida pioneers.

The letter, as to be expected in this period, contains no postmarks and of necessity had to be conveyed by private messenger or courier to St. Augustine where the Governor resided. Its following quoted contents reflect the hostility of the Indians and the insecurity of the settlers:

"Sirs

A very alarming information of a deliberate actof hostility comitted in our part of the province, upon the store of John Kean, by the Creeks - hath occasioned our assembling here to consider of what step is the most proper for us to take both for personal safety - & security of property - none appears to us more proper at present than to apply to you, for such protection as can be afforded - & you judge most beneficting. As the general report is, that the savages intend beginning with us upon the South Musquito River - we have neither arms, nor ammunition worth mentioning - we are

Sir
With Great Respect
Your Most Humble Servants
John Ross
W.Macdoughall"

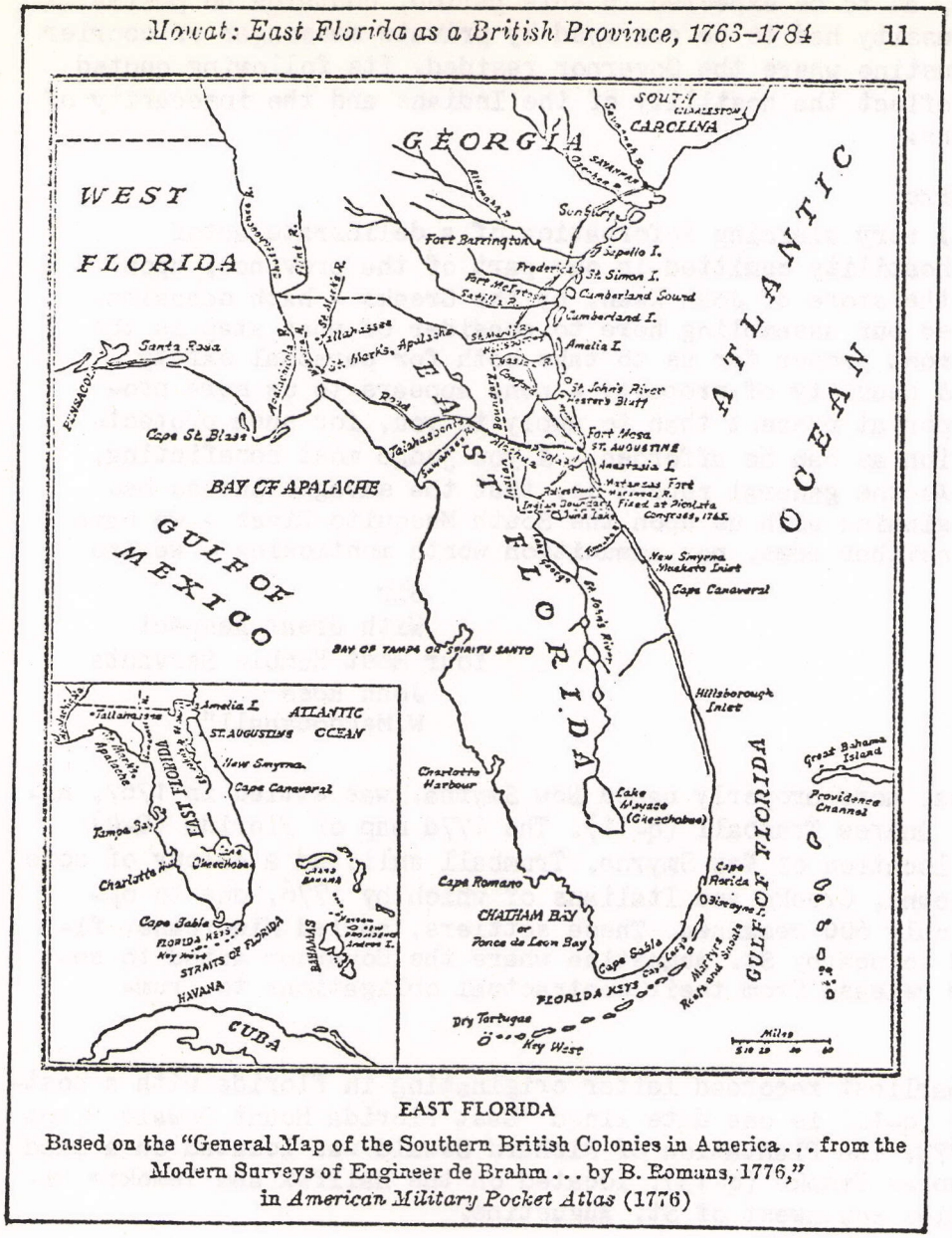
Smyrna, more properly named New Smyrna, was ettled in 1767, named by Dr. Andrew Trumball (q-11). The 177d map of Florida (Q-4) shows the location of New Smyrna. Trumball enlisted a colony of some 1500 Minorcans, Greeks and Italians of which by 1776, due to oppression, only 600 remained. These settlers, called Minorcans, finally fled to nearby St. Augustine where the Governor acted to secure their release from their contractual obligations to Trumball.

The earliest recorded letter originating in Florida with a postmark (Q-5) (q-12) is one date lined "East Florida Mount Oswald Plant 11 July 1773. The Plantation of Richard Oswald was located on a land Grant known as Timoku (q-13), located on the Halifax and Temokie Rivers 40 miles southwest of St. Augustine.

This letter has a Colonial 2 line postmark "Charles Town", (South Carolina) and Bishop type date stamp (OC 15) indicating date of arrival there. Also it has a London Bishop date stamp (6 DE) showing arrival there, and establishing time of transit from South Carolina to London to be 52 days. It was in transit a total of at least 148 days. Also there appears on the letter a manuscript "2N (2/)" apparently covering the double postage rate.

There is no transit marking showing whether this letter was

(q-11) Pickett, Rice and Spellman: Florida Postal History (1957), p. 32.
(q-12) Collection of Charles F. Meron i.
(q-13) Wilford B. Haworth: Florida - The British Colony. The Philatelist, Sept., 1959, Vol. 25, No. 12.



EAST FLORIDA

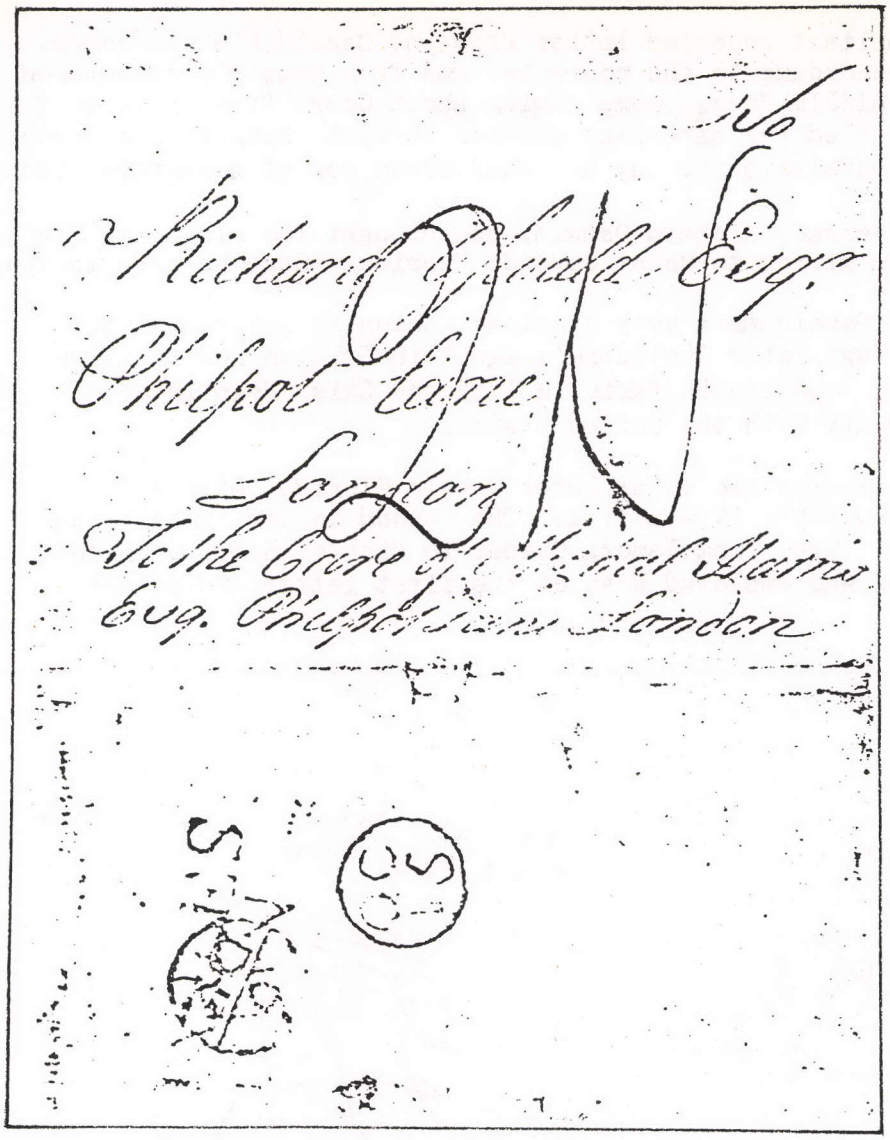
Based on the "General Map of the Southern British Colonies in America... from the Modern Surveys of Engineer de Brahm... by B. Romans, 1776," in *American Military Pocket Atlas* (1776)

Q-4. Map of East Florida, 1776.

carried overland or by ship from Florida to Charles Town. It is, however, reasonable to assume from the amount of time it was in transit that it would have went overland.

The letter therefore could have been picked up at St. Augustine by Colonial Postal Agent, Machenfuss, who, according to Hugh Finlay (q-14): "rides between Charles Town after the arrival of

(q-14) Hugh Finlay Journal begun Sept. 13, 1773, and ended June, 1774. Division of Philately and Postal History Smithsonian Institution. Also see Colonial and Revolutionary Posts by Konwiser.



Q-5. Mount Oswald Plantation, Florida, July 11, 1773, to London, via St. Augustine and CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15. Bishop mark OC/15, London Bishop mark 6/DE, all on reverse. Rated 2 shillings. (The author's collection).

packet boats in Charles Town. He sets out with the mail from Savannah, Sunbury and St. Augustine and returns." It is reported he made this trip of 300 miles 12 times a year so a letter could wait as much as 50 days for pick up.

No postal markings. however, have been noted by the author, which could be said to designate positively mail actually carried overland by the Colonial Postal Agent between Florida and the Colonial States. Also whether mail was carried from Florida as early

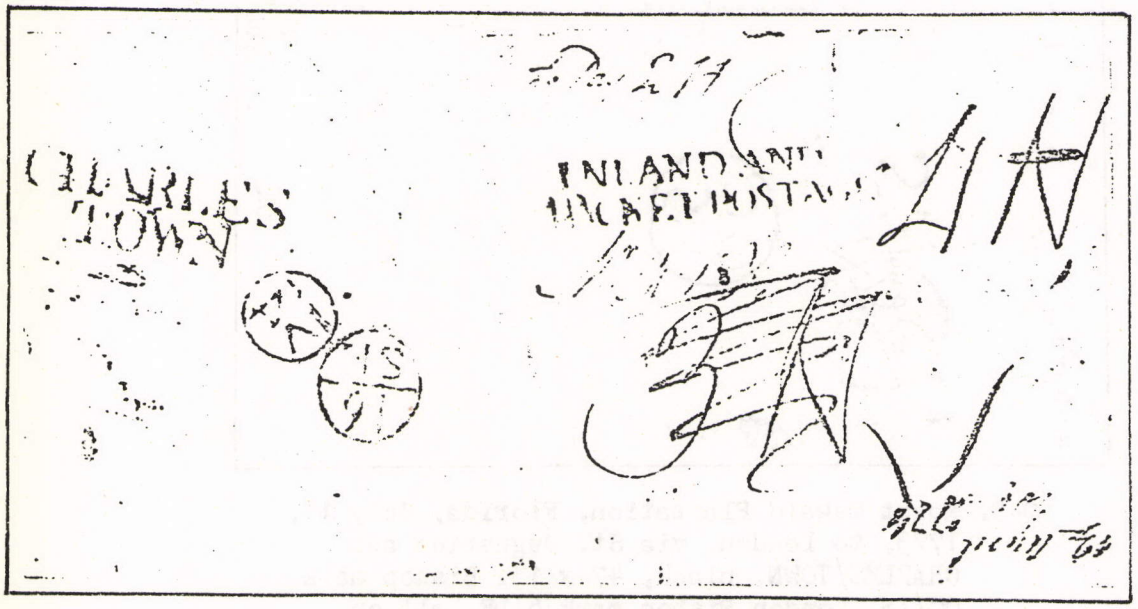
as the summer of 1773 is not presently known to the author.

This earliest reported letter from the Oswald Florida correspondence, according to the contents, was from Oswald's indentured carpenter, Malcolm Ross, complaining about Court fine of 41 £. The fine was levelled for harboring another servant. Ross in his letter also sought permission to buy his half-breed son of a negress slave.

The addressee, Richard Oswald, had brought 100 slaves on his own ship from Africa to Mount Oswald, Florida, where he grew indigo.

Richard Oswald was a very prominent Colonial politician and merchant. He was later Shelburne's agent in British negotiations with Benjamin Franklin in Paris in 1782 and Chief Negotiator of the peace treaty with the United States.

There are also two other later Oswald Florida letters described in Haworth's 1959 article. The second letter (Q-6) is dated April 12, 1774, from Temoka Cowper to Michael Herries signed by James Brown who employed Ross of the first letter. This 1774



Q-6. Temoka Cowper, Florida, April 12, 1774, to London, via St. Augustine and CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15. Bishop mark IV/14, INLAND AND/PACKET POSTAGE. London Bishop mark 16/SE. To pay 2 shilling. (Robson Lowe). (Reduced size).

letter refers to the ship "Brittannia" calling at St. Augustine before going to Charels Town, S.C.

This letter, like the first, has a "Charles Town" 2 line postmark and matching receipt Bishop date stamp of IV 14 (June 14) as well as "Inland and/Packet Postage" in 2 lines. The London Bishop

Mark 16 SE (Sept. 16) indicated date of receipt there. The letter was rerated from 3N to 4N.

The third letter from Mount Oswald (Part II, FLA 2.) is dated September 17, 1774, and likewise bears a "Charles Town" 2 line postmark and a colonial Bishop receipt stamp of OC 10. It has a "INL^{D} & PAC^{T} / Postage" in two lines as well as a London Bishop stamp (5/DE). Thus, this letter was in transit in America from St. Augustine to Charles Town 19 days and by ship to England 56 days.

The letter contains a manuscript inscription "St. Augustine" in the upper left hand corner.While author Haworth treated this as a postmark, it is more likely a private routing mark. At least there is nothing to show that any post office existed at St. Augustine at which any postmark would have been applied to letters. This letter, like the first, is rated 2N.

The fact that both of the two later Oswald letters had Inland Packet markings could justify an assumption that these letters travelled inland from St. Augustine to Charles Town before being shipped abroad by packet boat.

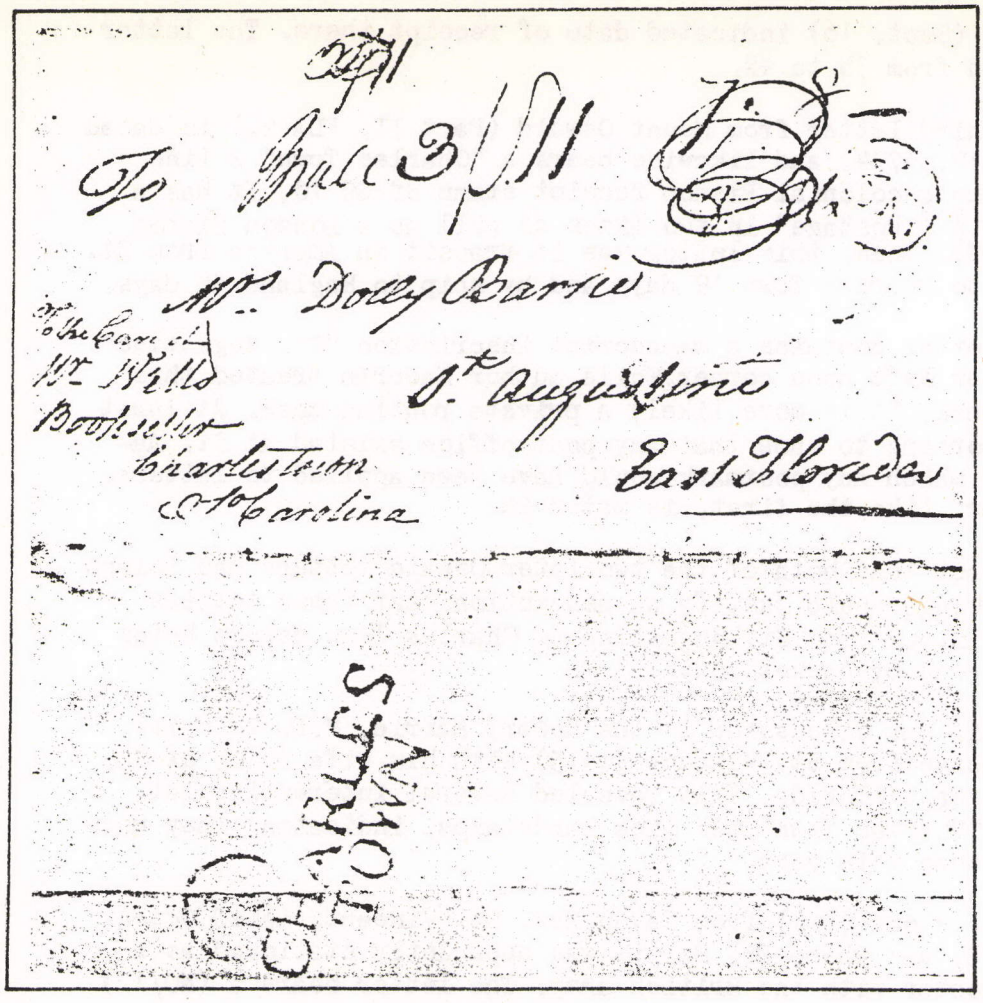
Next in our discussion is the Robert Barrie, M.D. Colonial correspondence from St. Vincent (q-15) with his wife Dolly at St. Augustine, East Florida. This revealed several interesting letters with "Charles Town" two line handstamps, indicating they were routed through this port.

There is one (Q-7) from Layou Bay, St. Vincent, dated October 8, 1772, and where Dr. Barrie was apparently stationed as a civilian doctor with the British army. The letter bears a (NO/12) Bishop type receipt stamp applied at Charles Town indicating the letter was in transit by ship approximately 35 days.

The cover bears a manuscript notation reading "To the care of Mr. Wells, Bookseller, Charles Town, South Carolina". Mr. Skrine in his article concludes this might have something to do with the pick up of the mail by Colonial Post Agent Mackenfuss for conveyance to Florida. However, as noted before, I have found nothing to indicate that mail was actually carried overland to and from Florida as early as 1772. Mr. Skrine also states that the manuscript 2/11 at the top of this cover above 3/11 is in the handwriting of Mackenfuss but does not indicate with what source, if any, he compared such manuscript to make his determination. Actually the two manuscript markings appear to be in the same handwriting. In my opinion, it is doubtful that any Colonial overland Postal Agent, let alone Mackenfuss, handled this letter. It is more reasonable to assume that "Mr. Wells, Bookseller" acted in much the same manner as a Coffee House in holding the letter until it could be sent by packet ship to St. Augustine.

Another Barrie letter to his wife Dolly which had handstamps

(q-15) Walter Skrine: St. Vincent to Florida. The Philatelist Postal Historian, June 1965.



Q-7. St. Vincent, October 8, 1772, to St. Augustine, by private hand to VOSTON, red, 43½ x 7½. Bishop mark 12/NO(VEMBER), overland to CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, forwarded by bookseller. Rated 8 dwts, 16 gr. Local currency "In all 3 sh. 11d." (Siegel Auction).

(Part II, FLA 1.) is date lined St. Vincent 14 December 1772. It bears a "Jamaica" straightline marking. Mr. Skrine in his article pictures this letter as having found its way to Kingston's "commercial rooms where there was a kind of clearing house for his letters". If so, this involved nothing more than the equivalent of a "Coffee House" handling of mail. It is possible that the light manuscript inscription Windward Islands (very light) was applied here.

This letter left Jamaica via the triangular (q-16) packet boat routing Jamaica-Pensacola-Charles Town. From the manuscript inscription "Pr the way of Carolina or Georgia" Dr. Barrie apparently intended that the letter be sent via the Charles Town

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(q-16) See Chapter on Transatlantic Mail.

leg of the triangular packet mail service. Apparently a ship to Pensacola was the first to leave so the letter was routed via "Pensacola" and then to "Charles Town" where the double line receipt marking was applied.

Now the question arises as to where the straight line handstamp "Pensacola" was applied, bearing in mind that Britain is believed to have supplied its Colonies with town handstamps. There are a number of possibilities. The stamp could have been applied (1) at Jamaica, (2) on ship, (3) at Pensacola, or (4) even at Charles Town.

As noted before Pensacola at this general time period was not much more than a stockade of about one hundred or so huts. As far as I can determine, there does not appear to have been any government post office in Pensacola ahead of it becoming a U.S. territory in 1821. It is believed mail may possibly have been handled there through a tavern or (Austin's) Coffee House. However, it is extremely unlikely that a Coffee House would have been supplied with a Governmental postal handstamp. It is my viewpoint that marking "Pensacola" was a routing stamp applied quite likely on board ship or possibly at Charles Town to indicate the letter did not come directly from Jamaica. In any event, I have found no documentation that convinces me that "Pensacola" was actually applied in Florida as a postmark.

More recently another letter has been uncovered in the State archives at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania (q-17) bearing a "Pensacola" straightline handstamp. This letter is from Kaskaskia, Illinois, and is dated February 5, 1774. It is believed it was carried via the Mississippi River to Mobile and then by ship to Pensacola. There it was routed via the established triangular packet boat mail system to Charlestown where the latter's two line handstamp, as well as the Bishop receipt stamp IA 10 (Jan. 10) were applied. It does not appear whether this letter was carried overland or by ship to Philadelphia, but it is quite likely it went via the overland route which was then in operation.

The "Pensacola handstamp on this letter purports to have been used nearly one year and a half after the earlier 1772 one. Also, the two handstamps appear to be different, the 1774 one having much heavier letters. It is difficult to understand this as it is hardly likely the earlier stamp would have worn out in such a short period of time taking into account the small amount of mail involved. Possibly the earlier stamp was lost or misplaced or the two different stamps were supplied to different towns or even ships merely as routing or transit stamps. Unless substantiating documented proof is found, it is in my opinion only conjecture to assume that the "Pensacola" handstamp was applied <u>in Pensacola</u> as an official postmark of a Florida post office.

(q-17) See Chapter on The American Bottom.

Postscript.

The preceding Chapter is published unedited. Its author did not provide cutlines to the illustrations. These were added by the Coordinator.

Since the author of the Chapter on Florida Colonial Mail completed his manuscript new evidence about the postal service in that area has become available. It throws additional, and to some extent a different light on the elusive postal history of British Florida.

The Coordinator.

The history of British Florida covers barely two decades. The territory was ceded to Great Britain on February 10, 1763, and the Union Jack had to be lowered again from Fort George in Pensacola on May 9, 1781 when Bernardo Galvez succeeded in overpowering the small British force there. St. Augustine, the other British foothold of some importance, became Spanish again in 1783.

It is certain that during this period of eighteen years no overland postal intercourse took place between the two Florida cities. Instead they were connected by the British packet service, mainly via Charlestown. Such service has been described in the Chapter dealing with the Transatlantic Mail. After the ships of this line discontinued calling at St. Augustine, because a sand bar blocked the port's entrance, the town's official postal contact was overland via Savannah and Charles Town. Pensacola depended on the Jamaica-Charlestown packet line and occsionally had letter contact with New Orleans and a few British outposts on the Mississippi River by private ship and overland via Mobile.

From an American point of view it is important to distinguish two periods for both East and West Florida. Between 1765 and 1776 they were parts of the southern postal district with head quarters in Charlestown. During the revolutionary war both Floridas remained loyal to the British crown. Consequently after the outbreak of hostilities Florida's postal contact with the colonies in revolt became virtually impossible. Whatever letters were written to or from St. Augustine or Pensacola came from or went to England or to those American Towns which at that time were occupied by British forces, almost exclusively New York. According to the existing literature (q-18) such correspondence was practically limited to military contacts, therefore was transported by warships. Only one private letter with a New York address has been found which originated in St. Augustine during this period.

Recently discovered information regarding Florida's postal

(q-18) Burton Barre: East Florida in the American Revolution. Jacksonville, 1932.

operations during the British colonial period are relevant to:

1. The postal service between St. Augustine and the North;
2. The St. Augustine post office;
3. The Pensacola post office.

1. The oldest letter with a St. Augustine destination which has been reported so far was written in Savanna(h) on April 25, 1765. Its cover, front and reverse, are depicted in Part II, GA 1 and 1A. The postage was one shilling, 4 p4nce. Since the distance between the two cities is approximately 170 miles, the single rate for a letter would have been 8 pence. It is evident therefore that the letter consistedof two sheets. Since it dealt with the liquidation of an estathis supposition seems to be justified. The amount of postage fitted the official overland regulations of the British colonial posts. At that time there was no packet line yet serving the Florida ports. A letter carried from Savannah to St. Augustine by a private ship would have been a "ship letter". and probably would have been marked with the Characteristic "Sh" or "S", and would have included the 2 pence captain's gratuity. Consequently this letter is a clear proofof an overland postal service operating between the two towns in 1765.

The letter shown in the preceding Chapter as figre Q-7, came from St. Vincent, B.W.I., via Boston and Charlestown to St. Augustine, and was charged 1 dwt, 8 gr. for the last part of its voyage. This again was the exact amount due for a single letter sent overland from Charlestown to St. Augustine in the year 1772. At that time the Jamaica-Pensacola-Charlestown-Jamaica packet service was in operation, but St. Augustine was not included in its schedule. Moreover a letter from Charlestown to St. Augustine could not have been carried by a packet boat. They sailed from Pansacola to Charlestown and not in the opposite direction because of the strong coastal current running northward. It all points to an overland carriage of this letter to its final destination. It is known that Mr. Mackenfuss - or McInfus - had been employed by the deputy postmaster general in Charlestown for this monthly overland service.

Two years later, on September 12, 1774, a letter was written in St. Augustine (see FLA 2 in Part II), addressed to London, which went via Charlestown. It carried the handstamped CHARLES/TOWN townmark. Furthermore it showed an INL^{D}& PAC^{T}/POSTAGE marking. Postal regulations at that time required prepayment by the sender of the inland and transatlantic postage. Due to the devaluation of the local currency the official postage for this overland distance of 8 pence sterling was rated at 1 shilling, an amount which was marked on the cover: "to pay 1N", by the same hand and again in red ink as the "St. Augustine" marking in the upper left-hand corner. The Charlestown postmaster acknowledged the receipt of this amount plus one shilling for the packet service to Falmouth: "2 N". Those endorsements and the absence of any indication of having been dispatched as a "ship letter" are convincing proof that this letter went by the overland mail

A third colonial letter from St. Augustine has survived, addressed

to London, which was written in Tomoka Cowper on April 12, 1774 (Q-6)? The endorsement "to Pay 2 N" obviously was written by the same hand which wrote a similar rate notation on the cover just described. The Charlestown town mark and the postage prepayment marking indicate that the two letters were processed by the South Carolina post office. The 2 N and 4 N rates prove that the letter's routing was the same; by land to Charlestown. It must have been a two-sheet letter.

The letters just reviewed show convincingly that at least during the period 1765-1774 the mails between Charlestown and Savannah in the north and St. Augustine in the south, were carried by the land route in both directions.

During the revolutionary war years another letter was dispatched from St. Augustine, dated July 30, 1776 (FLA 3 in Part II). Its cover carries a New York address and a "St. Augustine" marking in manuscript. Local officials corresponded often with military headquarters in New York by warship. However, this was a private letter, though written by Col.Glazier,the commander of the garrison. Therefore he had to pay the overseas rate of 1 shilling. Why this letter needed 11 months to reach its destination is irrelevant to the present subje t.

2. Of considerable interest and importance is the question as to whether St. Augustine had a post office and a postmaster during the twenty years it was in British hands. The evidence presented so far indicates that some person in the East Florida capital endorsed letters there in red ink. Fortunately a book by Charles L. Mowat: East Florida as a British Province, 1763-1784" gives a clear answer

Commons House of Assembly: First Assembly, 1781.

Speaker: WILLIAM BROWN
Clerk: PETER EDWARDS (appointed)

Robert Payne	Robert Scott	Philip Moore
John Ross	William Moss	Peter Edwards*
Stephen Egan	William McLeod	Thomas Forbes
George Kemp	Robert Baillie	John Leslie
Francis Levett	John Martin	John Mowbray
Jacobus Kip	Thomas Ross	Benjamin Lord

Positions Created by the Assembly, 1783

Treasurer: REV. JOHN FORBES.
Solicitor General: ROBERT JOHNSTON.
Deputy Provost-Marshal General: JOHN MARTIN.

Deputy Clerk of the Council

DAVID YEATS. Appointed, October 31, 1764.

Messenger of the Council

JOSEPH CHETWOOD. Appointed, August 20, 1765.
JOHN HALEY. Appointed, September 7, 1772.

Clerk of the Public Accounts

ALEXANDER SKINNER. Appointed, November 17, 1764; died March, 1779.
PETER EDWARDS. 1779——.

Keeper of Indian Presents

ALEXANDER SKINNER. 1764-1779.
PHILIP MOORE. 1779——.

Deputy Postmaster

JOHN HALEY.

to the question. On pages 162-165 it carries a complete list of public and military officials, part of which is reproduced here in figure Q-8. The name of the deputy postmaster in St. Augustine was: John Haley. For some reason the year of his appointment is missing, whereas such dates are listed for all other functionaries. It is certain that the appointment of a deputy postmaster in St. Augustine originated in the Deputy Postmaster General's office in Charlestown, whereas all other officials received their commission from the local Governor. This fact may account for the missing date which in 1781, when the list was printed, probably was hard to find. Mr. Haley, besides being postmaster, became "Coroner" on February 11, 1769, "Marshal of Court of Admiralty" on April 30, 1771, "Messinger of the Council" on September 7, 1772. During the first year of the Spanish reoccupation of Florida he acted on behalf of one of the evacuated former citizens for the evaluation of that person's abandoned property (q-19). Consequently Haley must have been a long-time citizen of St. Augustine. It may be assumed therefore that his postmastership began at a fairly early date. In a small community as St. Augustine was and as in many other colonialtowns of a similar size a postmaster's day was definitely not filled by dispatching and receiving the few pieces of mail, nor by the little bit of postal book keeping that was involved. As so many of his colleagues elsewhere were doing Mr. Haley assumed other duties in the Government's office building and needed other sources of income.

3. Similar questions have arisen regarding the postal situation in Pensacola during the British administration. The available material and information which can be used for a reconstruction of conditions there is of a different nature than in St. Augustine's case.

The most important and positive facts which facilitate making a diagnosis are two perfectly identical town-markings on 1772 and 1774 letters. They are identical though the handstamp when applied to one of the covers was poorly inked. These documents are exhibited in figures V-7 and FLA 1 of Part II.

The only information regarding public offices in Pensacola which has been found is Governor Johnson's list of annual salaries and his successor's list for the following year. Neither of these documents mentions a postmaster's remuneration, which is not surprising because postmasters were not on a local government's payroll, did not receive a fixed salary, but were entitled to receive a commission based on the postage monies received. However, Robson Lowe, the eminent British postal historian and his assistant, Mrs. Horowicz, wrote: "Mr. Blackwell was postmaster in Pensacola. At his death in 1777 Mr. John Stephenson became postmaster." (q-20) In reply to a request for details Mr. Lowe replied that "the names of the postmasters were found by Mrs. Horowicz in the G.P.O. Records (American Letter Book 1773-1783)." It is of interest to note that John Stephenson was the same person in Pensacola who forwarded the Kaskaskia letter of figure V-7.

(q-19) Wilbur H. Siebert: Loyalists in East Florida, 1774 to 1785. The Florida State Historical Society, 1929.

(q-20) Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe: The Colonial Posts in the United States of America. London, 1967. p.18.

It has been said that Pensacola was so unimportant a community during the years of the British administration that the existance of a post office there seemed to be highly improbable. A primitive village consisting of about one hundred or so huts could hardly be in need of a post office. There is no doubt that such a description of the place was correct at the time the British occupied the area in 1763. However, there is convincing evidence that conditions improved rapidly. The well-known botanist Bartram, who visited Florida in 1777, including Pensacola, was much impressed by the town's appearance. Garland Taylor (q-21) who reported on Bartram's findings wrote: "Pensacola was a community of several hundred habitations, with a beautiful stone mansion for the governor, and many substantial homes for officers and professional men."

There is also proof of the town's growing importance as a commercial center, with a positive interest in the postal services available to the community. As reported in the Chapter on the Transatlantic Mail, Oensacola was one of the ports served by the British packet line from Kingston, B.W.I. to Charlestown, which started as early as 1765. Mail from and to England was processed in Pensacola. However, the local merchants were far from satisfied with this rare opportunity of having outside letter contact only four times a year. In 1769 they sent a Memorial to the Postmaster General in London. It read as follows:

> "To The Right Honourable His Majestys Post Master General
> The Memorial of the Merchants & Inhabitants of the Province of West Florida.
>
> Humbly Sheweth
>
> That at the Commencement of the Civil Government of this Colony the West India Packet were appointed to touch Pensacola which gave this place an opportunity of Corresponding with Great Britain every five or six weeks to the great encouragement & general advantage of this Colony.
>
> That the present regulation of one Packet only makes it impossible to receive regular advices from England above four times a year at most, & it may frequently happen that three or four mails may lay a considerable time at Jamaica waiting for conveyance.
>
> That in case any accident should befall the present Packet we shall not receive any intelligence till such accident is repaired which may take months & will be of great detriment to trade.
>
> We need not point out to Your Lordships the Benefit to be derived from a frequent intercourse with the Mother country or how much the late alteration is prejudicial to the Welfare of the Province.
>
> We hope Your Lordships will take into consideration that assistance which a young Colony requires & from Your Lordships attention to whatever may promote the

---

(q-21) Garland Taylor: Colonial Settlement and Early Revolutionary Activity in West Florida up to 1779. Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 22, February, 1936.

good of His Majestys Subjects we beg leave to request Your Lordships will please to order another Packey on the Present Establishment.

And your Memorialists will ever Pray.

George Gauld	I. Bruce	I. Hardy
Jno. Falconer	Evan Jones	Joseph Garrow
John Southwell	David Hodge	Ira. Ponssett
Wm. Williams	James Jones	Jam. Michell
Walter Hood	Arth. Strother	James Amoss
Thos. Underwood	Phil. Comyn	Will. Marshall
Geo. Tassee	Ben. Ware	David Ross
Patrick Foley	Danl. Ward	John Haigh"

(q-22)

This Memorial was supported by John Ellis, the King's Agent for West Florida, who in April, 1770 brought his influence to bear "in the name of the Governor and ... with the consent & approbation of His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for America". In july the Treasury Board, persuaded by Ellis' letter, authorized the long sought additional packet for West Florida (q-23).

The foregoing proves that Pensacola in 1770 was ripe for having an improved postal service. Nothing stood in its way for the establishment of a post office and the appointment of a deputy postmaster.

(q22) From British Transcripts in the Library of Congress.
(q-23) Quoted from The Alabama Review, April, 1963. p. 141.

The House of Deputies, being thoroughly convinced that a firm union of the colonies is absolutely necessary for the preservation of their ancient, legal, and constitutional rights, has unanimously voted the appointment of a committee of correspondence.

May 15, 1773. (r-1)

R. The Committee of Correspondence.

Alex.L. ter Braake

The above subject is only remotely related to the history of the colonial postal system. No student of American postal history would think of collecting the few pieces of committee mail which have survived and are in private hands, though collectors of Americana might try to do so, because of the contents of these rare documents, or for their writers' signatures. The committees of correspondence placed no special endorsements or markings on the covers of their letters. The outside appearance of their written messages was in no way different from those mailed by private correspondents. The committees did not have the franking privilege. Yet they left an unmistakable imprint on the country's postal past. This is not surprising because much of the governmental system in America found its origin in the discussions by the committee-men and in the decisions they arrived at. This was particularly the case during the years immediately preceding the revolutionary war. It would indeed be unthinkable that the letter post had escaped their attention, dependent as their activities were to a considerable extent on the functioning of the postal services.

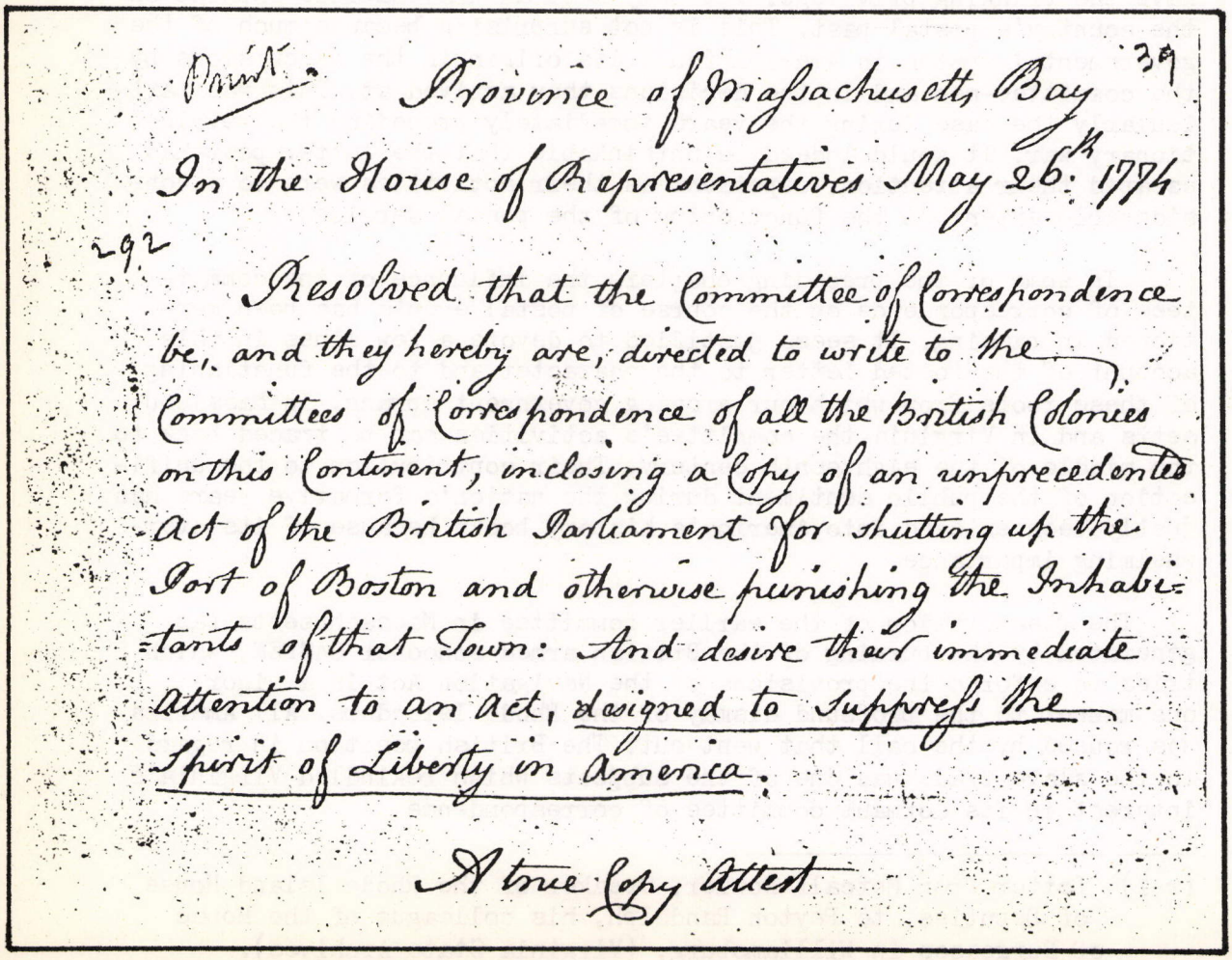
In some of the preceding chapters the influence of the committees of correspondence on the course of postal events has been mentioned in passing. It seems justified to devote a few lines in this account of the Posted Letter to the character and to the functioning of these roots from which our growing government sprang. In Massachusetts and in Virginia the committee's activities can be traced back to the middle of the eighteenth century. Their contribution to the unification of the public sentiment during the nation's formative years has justly been entered into America's history books because of its overwhelming importance.

The reactivation of the earlier committee in Massachusetts was generated by the burning of the British armed schooner GASPEE, which tried to enforce the provisions of the Navigation Act in a vigorous manner to the profound dismay of the Rhode Islanders. All America was roused by the call that went out. The British position in regard to the slave trade was one of the subjects which rekindled Virginia's interest in its dormant committee of correspondence.

(r-1) Letter from Metcalf Bowler, Speaker of the Rhode Island House of Deputies, to Peyton Randolph, his colleague of the House of Burgesses in Williamsburg. (Virginia State Archives).

For a proper understanding of the place these committees occupied in the developing colonial system of government it must be mentioned that quite a variety of other committees had been established, such as the committees of safety, the activities of which were far from identical in the several colonies and often overlapped those of others. Among other things the committees of safety became active in the procurement of war materials and weapons (see Chapter L). Also there was a marked distinction between the objectives of the inter-colonial committees of correspondence and of those whose task it was to maintain international contacts. The first named functioned not only as a medium for the dissemination of intelligence, but also as a political instrument. The international committees of correspondence on the other hand focussed their activities on obtaining the latest information regarding opinions and political reactions in the House of Commons, in the chambers of White Hall, and in European Departments of Foreign Affairs.

And again there was this important difference: the Virginia inter-colonial committee of correspondence was appointed by the Assembly, whereas Massachusetts, in addition to a provincial committee, had a variety of such local panels, their members being appointed by the towns under the spirited guidance of men like Samuel Adams. The Assembly had no say whatsoever in their selection of members, nor in their programs and activities.



Print

Province of Massachusetts Bay

39

In the House of Representatives May 26th 1774

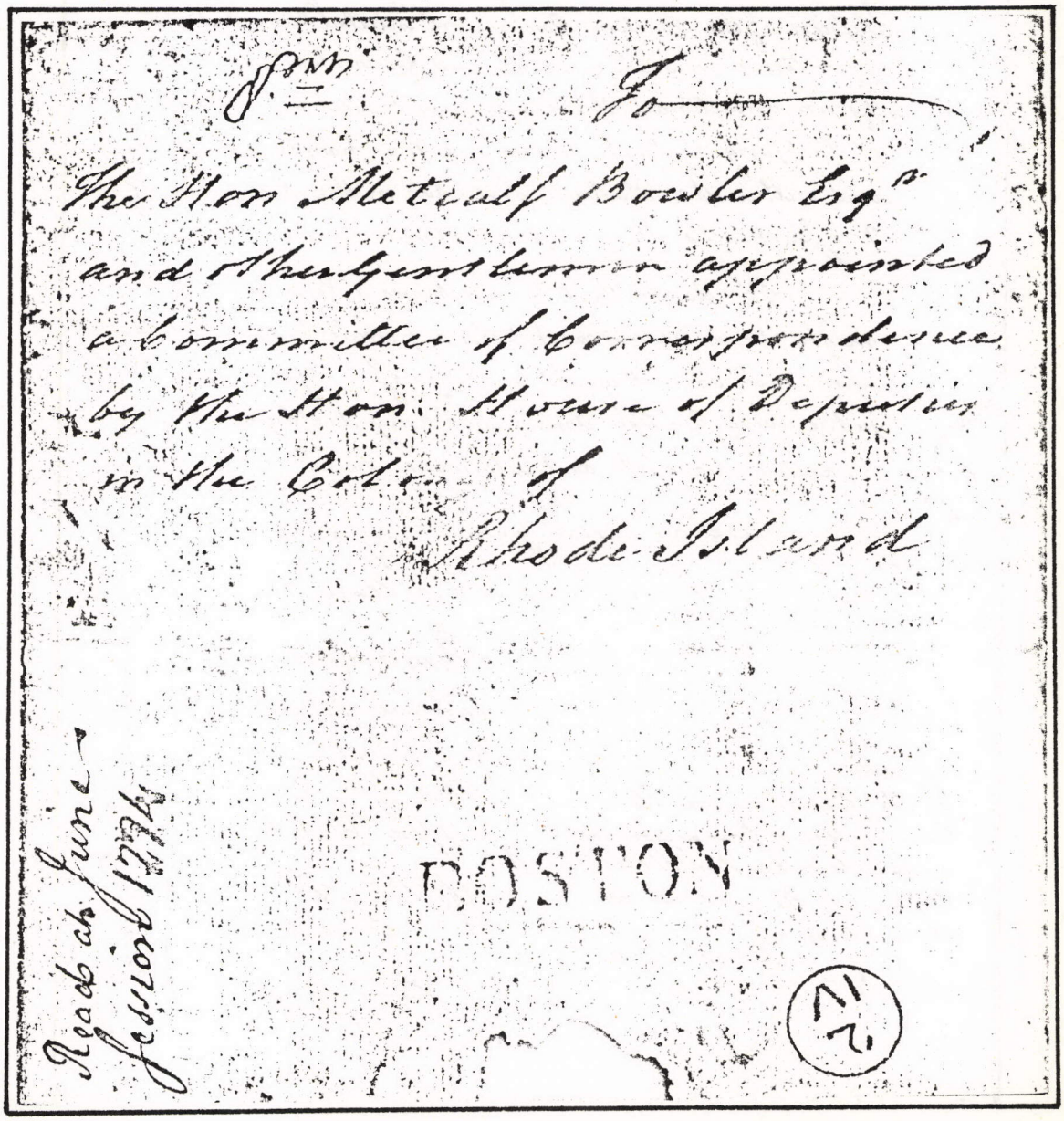
292

Resolved that the Committee of Correspondence be, and they hereby are, directed to write to the Committees of Correspondence of all the British Colonies on this Continent, inclosing a Copy of an unprecedented Act of the British Parliament for shutting up the Port of Boston and otherwise punishing the Inhabitants of that Town: And desire their immediate attention to an act, designed to suppress the Spirit of Liberty in America.

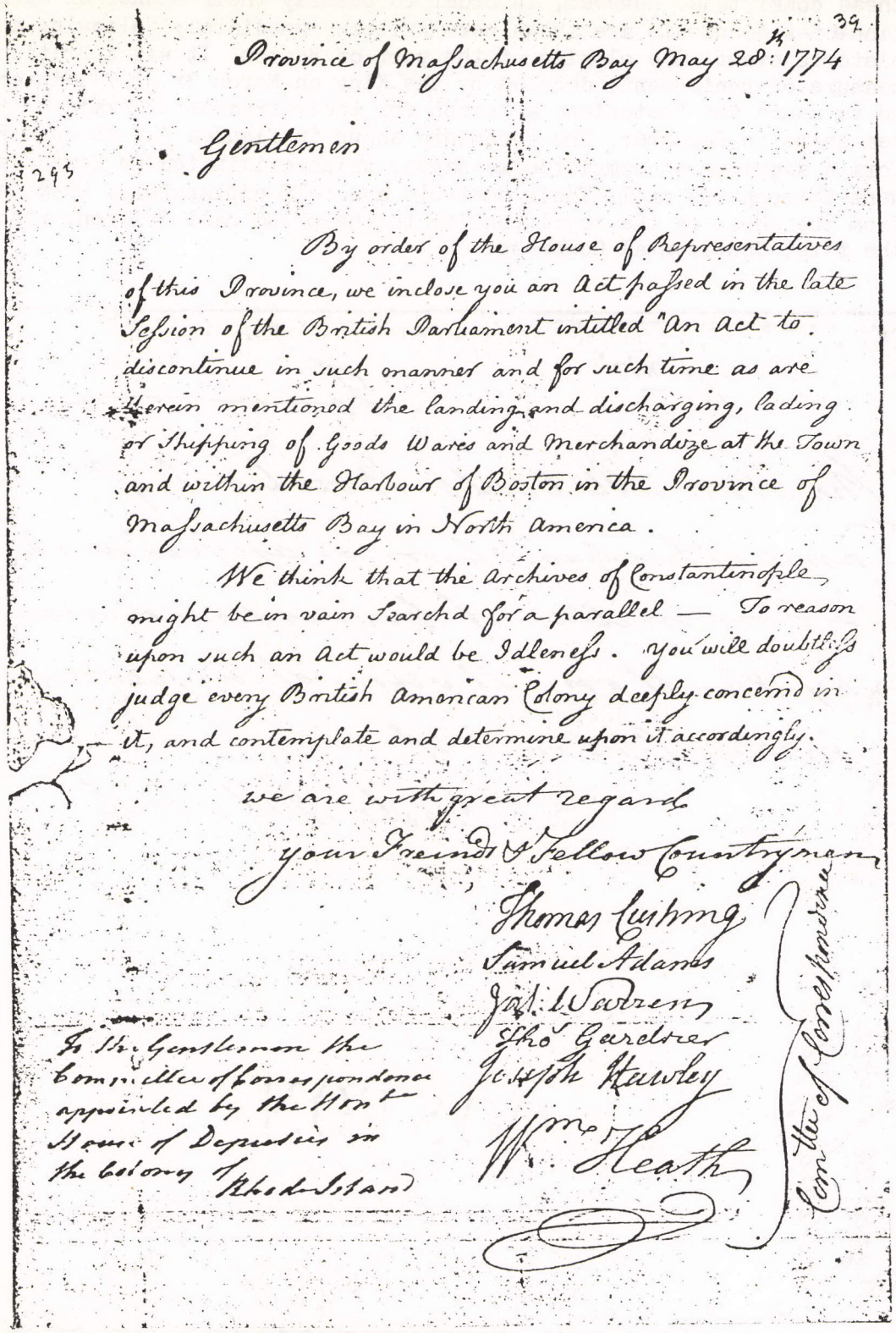
A true Copy Attest

R-1. A resolution by the Massachusetts Assembly. (Rhode Island State Archives).

It is not the purpose of this Chapter to develop the history of these committees. However, in order to portray their manner of operation a few documents are shown here written immediately following an historic event: the closing of the port of Boston. It was a British measure of punishment, decreed by the King on March 31, 1774, intended to teach the Bostonians a lesson for their treacherous raid on the tea ships in December. The documents shown in figures R-1 through R-5 form a sequence of committee messages, which originated in Boston and went through the mail. Their contents are self-explanatory. They lead from the shock of the royal penalty to the proud call for convening the first Continental Congress.



R-2. BOSTON, red, 43½ x 7½, Bishop mark 2/IV(NE), 1774, all on reverse, to Rhode Island (Providence). (Rhode Island State Archives).



39

Province of Massachusetts Bay May 28th 1774

Gentlemen

293

By order of the House of Representatives of this Province, we inclose you an Act passed in the late Session of the British Parliament intitled "An Act to discontinue in such manner and for such time as are therein mentioned the landing and discharging, lading or Shipping of Goods Wares and Merchandize at the Town and within the Harbour of Boston in the Province of Massachusetts Bay in North America.

We think that the Archives of Constantinople might be in vain Searchd for a parallel — To reason upon such an Act would be Idleness. You will doubtless judge every British American Colony deeply concernd in it, and contemplate and determine upon it accordingly.

we are with great regard

your Freinds & Fellow Countrymen

Thomas Cushing
Samuel Adams
Jas. Warren
Thos Gardner
Joseph Hawley
Wm Heath

Comtee of Correspondence

To the Gentlemen the Committee of Correspondence appointed by the Honble House of Deputies in the Colony of Rhode Island

R-3. Boston Letter of May 28, 1774, to Rhode Island, mailed under cover of figure R-2. (Rhode Island State Archives).

Province of Massachusetts Bay June 17th 1774.

Sir

Agreable to the directions of the House of Representatives of this Province I have the Honor to transmit you a Copy of certain Resolves they Entered into in their present Session, by which you will perceive that it is their opinion that a Meeting of Committees from the several Colonies on this Continent is highly expedient and necessary and that they propose that such Meeting be at the City of Philadelphia on the first day of September next, and that for the purposes mentioned in said Resolves, they have appointed a Committee of five on the part of this Province, whom they have directed to Repair to Philadelphia at the time before mentioned. As this appears to be a Measure absolutely necessary for the Establishment of the Rights and Liberties of the Colonies upon a just and solid foundation and for the Restoration of Union & Harmony between both Countries, It is not doubted, but it will Agreed to in your Colony, if it should, it is desired that as early Notice as possible might be transmitted to.

Your most Obedt. humble Servt.
Thomas Cushing Sp.

PS If this Letter cannot be Communicated seasonably to your Honorable House, It is desired it may be Communicated to their Committee of Correspondence

R-5. Province of Massachusetts Bay (Boston) Committee of Correspondence, June 17, 1774, to its fellow-committee in Providence, R.I. soliciting support for a proposed meeting of all provincial committees in Philadelphia.
(Rhode Island State Archives).

But Massachusetts was not the only colony where such an initiative was taken. During a meeting at the Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg the Burgesses discussed the political events of the last few months and formulated their conclusions in the following "Resolution":

> "A Congress should be appointed ... from all the Colonies to concert a general and uniform plan for the defense and preservation of our common rights ..." (r-2)

This initiative actually preceded the one taken by the Massachusetts House of Representatives (r-3).

At this tavern meeting the Committee of Correspondence agreed upon a circular which the speaker, Peyton Randolph, was directed to send to the other colonies. These invitational letters to attend a general meeting of all the provincial committees were dated May 28, 1774. From a postal history point of view it is interesting that with the letter to the North Carolina committee identical messages were enclosed addressed to the committees in South Carolina and Georgia, and that the North Carolinians were requested to dispatch those enclosures to the two more southern colonies.This forwarding procedure demonstrates how uncertain postal connections were with the southern colonies. Apparently the Virginians expected their colleagues in New Bern to be better informed about the mail services to Charlestown and Savannah than they were in Williamsburg.

This uncertainty is further accentuated by the reply the Charlestown committee sent to Williamsburg. The cover of that letter is shown in figure R-6. The South Carolina committee rather than letting it be processed by the local post office, preferred to entrust their message to the captain of a private vessel bound for Philadelphia. From the Pennsylvania capital the letter was handled by the still operating British post who forwarded it to its destination in Virginia. One full month passed by between the date the reply was written and the day it was received in Williamsburg.

In addition to the overriding political influence which the Committees of Correspondence exercised they had a strong hand in the postal revolution which took place in 1774 and 1775. William Goddard, who was the instigator of this rebellion (See Chapter H), realized that his chances for success largely depended on the opinions and actions of these committees. When he set out on his visits to the New England towns in February, 1774 for the promotion of his "Constitutional Post" the people's pulse was beating considerably faster, quickened by British harassments, culminating in the arrival of the teaships in Boston's harbor and resulting in the "Tea Party".

Thus Goddard found a fertile ground here and there for sowing the seeds of his radical ideas. Leaving Philadelphia in February his first stop was in New York, where the printer and ex-postmaster, John Holt, was

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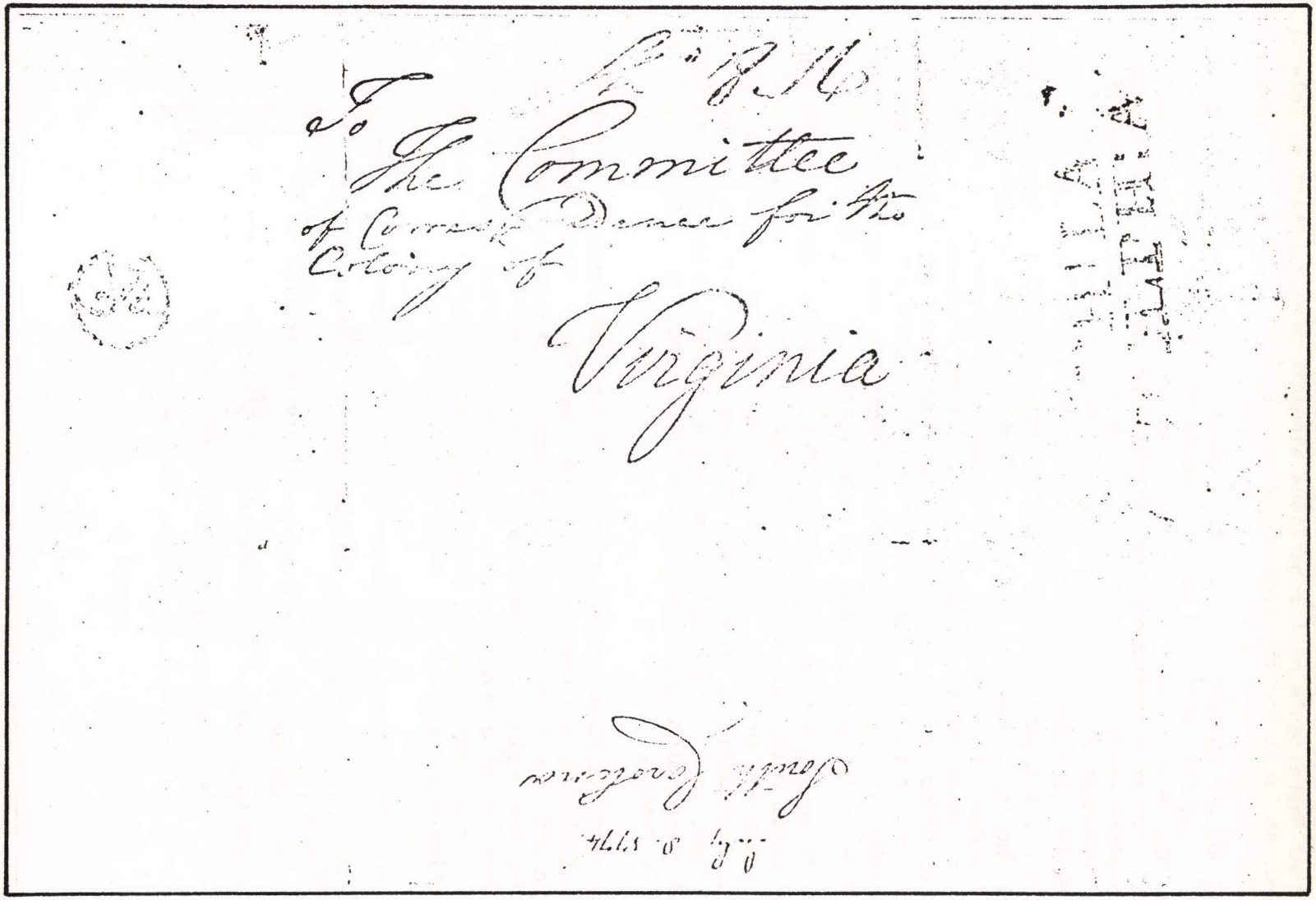
(r-2)Bruce Lancaster and J.H.Plumb: The American Heritage Book of the Revolution. New York, 1958. p. 81.

(r-3) John R. Alsen: The History of the American Revolution. New York, 1969. p. 153.



R-6. Charlestown, S.C., July 8, 1774, by the Committee of Correspondence to its namesake in Williamsburg, Va., as a 'shipletter' via PHILA/DEPHIA, red, 53 x 16, Bishop mark 6/AV(GUST). Rated 16 grs. ship letter rate, plus double letter rate Philadelphia - Williamsburg. (Virginia State Archives).

ready to assist him in meeting the right persons for his plans. But it appeared that Manhattan's most rebellious elements were hesitant to follow Goddard, at least for the time being.

It is not the purpose of this short Chapter to report on William Goddard's investigative journeys, nor to analyze the results of his efforts to promote his revolutionary postal plans. At the time of writing a series of articles on this subject has started appearing in the Collectors Club Philatelist (r-4). The present pages try to emphasize more specifically the important role the Committees of Correspondence in several communities played in supporting Goddard's ideas and in certain instances in pushing them from a plan on paper into an operating entity, though a short-lived one. The fact, however, that the gradual execution of this plan completely disorganized the British postal system and succeeded in substituting it by a truely American organization, thereby contributing to the development of other revolutionary ideas, culminating in the Congressional decision to set up its own Post Office under the leadership of Benjamin Franklin, makes it desirable to throw some light on the role of the Committees' part in ths postal drama of those years.

There is no doubt that the main role fell into the lap of the Boston Committee. Local political developments there had created an atmosphere which was conducive to daring proposals and actions, such as William Goddard's. His suggestion to convert the existing postal service, operated by the British, into an independent one based on subscription such as the one he had succeeded in organizing between Philadelphia and Baltimore, fell into fertile ground.

When Goddard arrived in Boston from New York the Committee memebers listened attentively and soon endorsed his ideas for a postal service in competition with the British service. Letters of intruduction were written to other New England committees and one of its members, John Pitts, was appointed "to be a Committee for the purpose of presenting a Subscription Paper for the supporting a Constitutional Post Office in the colonies to the Gentlemen of the Town for their signing" (r-5).

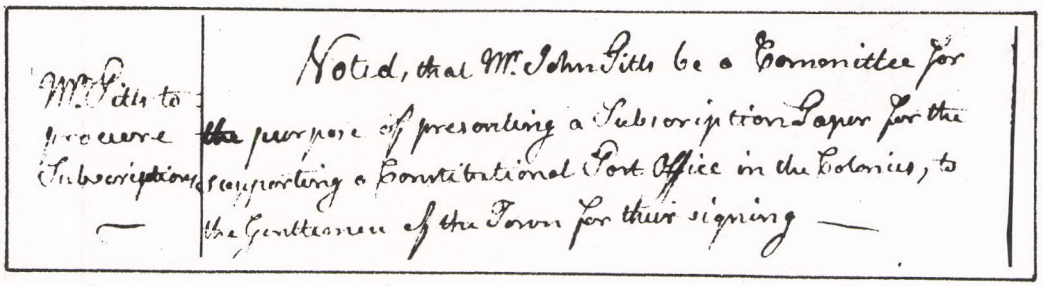


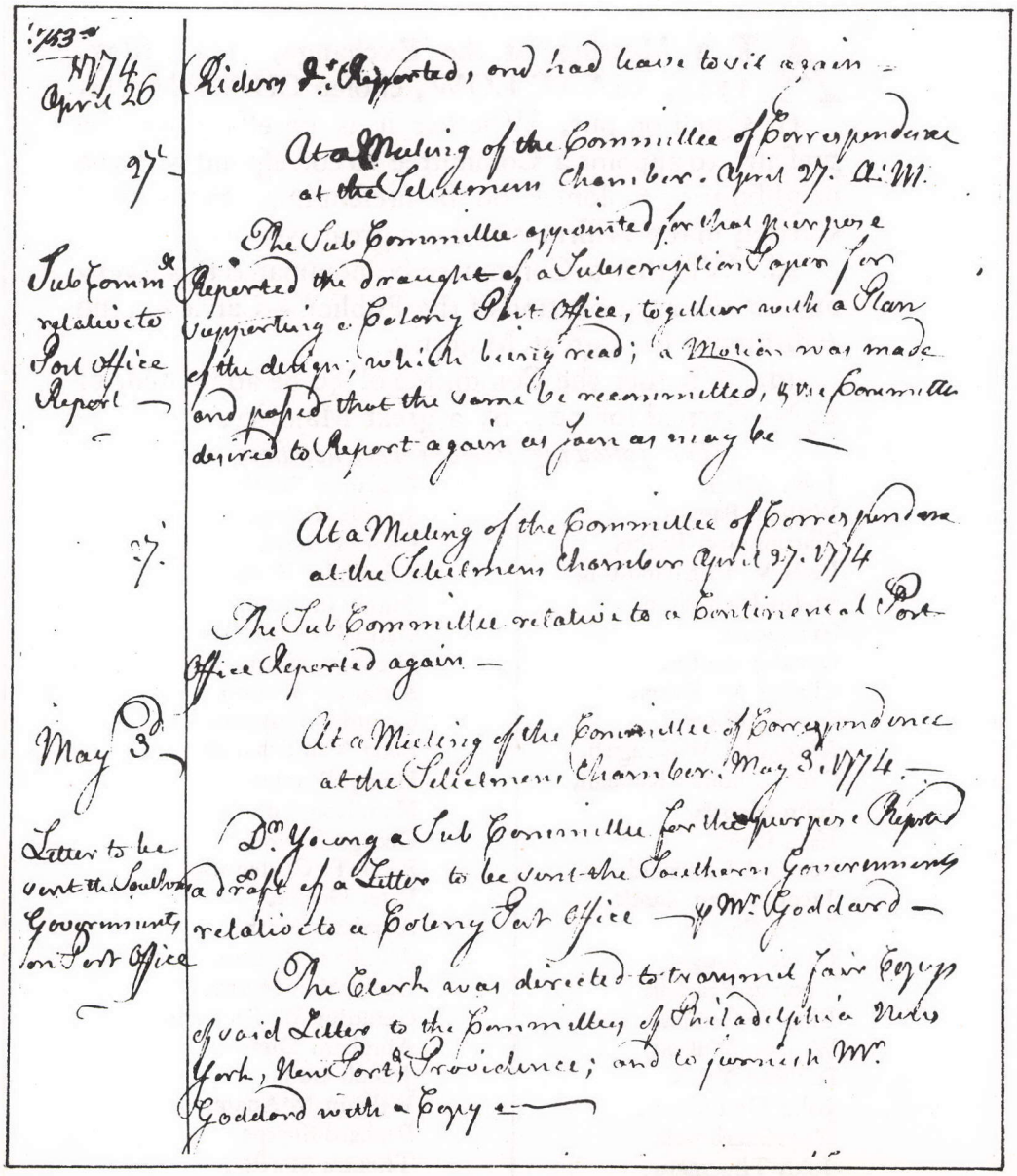
Figure R-7

(r-4) The first part, written by Calvet M. Hahn, in the Collectors Club Philatelist, Volume 53, No. 3, starting on page 158.

(r-5) Minute Book of the Boston Committee of Correspondence, page 739, March 24, 1774. (New York Public Library). The entry is reproduced in figure R-7.

It was the beginning of a lively exchange of letters between the Boston Committee and its fellow-committees in the communities to the north of the city, within and beyond the borders of the Massachusetts Bay colony. Goddard an his plans were properly introduced in these messages. However, though a sympathetic feeeling prevailed everywhere not one of the local governments was prepared yet to rebuff the British without Boston setting an example.

When Goddard returned from the north and consulted with the members of the Boston Committee of Correspondence the following steps were taken to assist the self-styled postmaster general in his promotional efforts further to the south. The minute book of the Boston Committee shows the entries shown in figure R-8:



1774
April 26 Riders &c. Reported, and had leave to sit again —

27th At a Meeting of the Committee of Correspondence at the Selectmens Chamber. April 27. A.M.

Sub Comm.e relative to Post Office Report — The Sub Committee appointed for that purpose Reported the draught of a Subscription Paper for supporting a Colony Post Office, together with a Plan of the design; which being read; a Motion was made and passed that the same be recommitted, & the Committee desired to Report again as soon as may be —

27. At a Meeting of the Committee of Correspondence at the Selectmens Chamber April 27. 1774

The Sub Committee relative to a Continental Post Office Reported again —

May 3d At a Meeting of the Committee of Correspondence at the Selectmens Chamber. May 3. 1774 —

Letter to be sent the Southern Governments on Post Office Dr. Young a Sub Committee for the purpose Reported a draft of a Letter to be sent the Southern Governments relative to a Colony Post Office — by Mr. Goddard —

The Clerk was directed to transmit fair Copys of said Letters to the Committees of Philadelphia New York, New Port & Providence; and to furnish Mr. Goddard with a Copy —

Figure R-8

The Clerk of the Committee "was directed to transmit fair copys of such letters (relative to a Colony Post) to the Committees of Philadelphia, New York, New Port & Providence; and to furnish Mr. Goddaed with a copy." In this letter, dated May 5, 1774, the Boston Committee encouraged its fellow-organizations elsewhere to promote Goddard's proposal in their places, being convinced themselves that the Constitutional Post could be extended from North to south.

It certainly was not the postal issue alone that blew new life into the New York Committee of Correspondence. But it is a fact that shortly after the receipt of the Boston letter it was reinstated and expanded from a membership of fifteen to one of fifty (figure R-9).

AT a Meeting at the Exchange, 16th May, 1774, ISAAC LOW, choſen CHAIRMAN.

1ſt Queſtion put, Whether it is neceſſary for the preſent, to appoint a Committee to correſpond with the neighbouring Colonies, on the preſent important Criſis? Carried in the Affirmative by a great Majority.

2d. Whether a Committee be nominated this Evening for the Approbation of the Public?---Carried in the Affirmative by a great Majority.

3d. Whether the Committee of 50 be appointed, or 25?—Carried for 50, by a great Majority.

The following Perſons were nominated:

John Alſop,
William Bayard,
Theophylact Bache,
Peter V. B. Livingſton,
Philip Livingſton,
Iſaac Sears,
David Johnſton,
Charles M‘ Evers,
Charles Nicholl,
Alexander M‘Dougall,
Capt. Thomas Randall,
John Moore,
Iſaac Low,
Leonard Liſpenard,
Jacobus Van Zandt,
James Duane,
Edward Laight,
Thomas Pearſall,
Elias Deſbroſſes,
William Walton,
Richard Yates,
John De Lancey,
Miles Sherbrook,
John Thurman,
John Jay,
John Broome,
Benjamin Booth,
Joſeph Hallett,
Charles Shaw,
Alexander Wallace,
James Jauncey,
Gabriel H. Ludlow,
Nicholas Hoffman,
Abraham Walton,
Gerardus Duyckinck,
Peter Van Schauck,
Henry Remſen,
Hamilton Young,
George Bowne,
Peter T. Curtenius,
Peter Goelet,
Abraham Braſher,
Abraham P. Lott,
David Van Horne,
Gerardus W. Beekman,
Abraham Duryee,
Joſeph Bull,
William M‘Adam,
Richard Sharpe,
Thomas Marſton,
Francis Lewis, added *nem. con.* May 19th.

R-9. From: The American Revolution in New York. (1926), p. 36.

Within the context of this book's aim it would have no sense to give a complete resume of the constructive aid the Committees of Correspondence gave to the revolutionary efforts which ultimately resulted in the retirement of the British postal services in May, 1775.

Boston's role had been prominent during the preliminaries, but when it came to effective action British troops prevented Bostonians from being participants in the postal revolution.

Immediately following the tragic events in Lexington and Concord the Constitutional Post Office became a reality, initiated by both the provincial and the local Committees of Correspondence. Other Chapters in this book are telling a small part of the story (Chapters H and J), but the true drama of the Provisional Post, as it is often called by analytical historians, is a subject of such dimensions that it should be told separately (Calvet M. Hahn: "The Provisional Post of the United States", in the Collectors Club Philatelist, starting in volume 53, No.3, page 158).

General Joseph Palmer had barely dispatched his "Lexington Alarm", carried by Israel Bissell to the Committees of Correspondence throughout the land, from Massachusetts to Virginia, when measures were taken to put the revolutionary postal machine in motion. While people had been hesitant to take the irrevocable step during the earlier months of this fateful year, all restraint disappeared when the shocking news of a blood-red encounter with British troops reached the patriotic committees. All at once William Goddard's plan received support wherever it had been proposed. In Hartford and Norwalk, in Stamford and Middletown, and in scores of other communities from north to south resolutions to that effect were passed by the Committies of Correspondence. A sample is copied here:

"Norwalk, May 7, 1775.

We, the suscribers do fully approve of Mr. Goddard's plan for establishing a constitutional Post-Office in America, and do therefore recommend Mr. John Betts, of Norwalk, to receive and forward all Letters, until the business of the Post-Office shall be regulated by the Continental Congress.

Samuel Gruman)
Thaddeus Betts) Committee."
Eliphat Lochwood)

Similar resolutions were taken elsewhere. Some of these can be found in the American Archives, 4th Series, colume I, pages 982-3. They resulted in formal enactments by the provincial assemblies by which post offices were established and post riders were appointed. A copy of such a resolution, passed by the Rhode Island General Assembly on "the first Wednesday in May, 1775," follows here:

"It is voted and resolved, that this General Assembly will join the other colonies in establishing post of-

fices and post riders, in order to preserve an intercourse between the different colonies, which will prove so beneficial to the public, as well as to individuals; and that this colony will, for the present, defray the expense of post riders throughout this colony, upon the usual post road.

It is further voted and resolved, that post offices be, and hereby are, established at the following places, to wit: at Newport, Providence, Bristol, Warren, Tower Hill, in South Kingstown, and Westerly; and that the following persons be, and hereby are, appointed post masters, to wit:

For Newport, Mr. Nathaniel Otis; Providence, Mr. John Carter; Bristol, Mr. Jonathan Russell; Warren, Mr. Shubael Burr; Tower Hill, Mr. Ray Sands; Westerly, Mr. Joshua Babcock.

It is further voted and resolved, that the rates and duties for postage of letters, be as follows, to wit:

Rated of Postage in the Colony of Rhode Island.

	℔	s	d
For any distance not exceeding sixty miles	0	0	5 1-4
- sixty miles, and not exceeding one hundred miles	0	0	8
- one hundred miles, and not exceeding two hundred miles	0	0	10 1-4
- two hundred miles, and not exceeding three hundred miles	0	1	1
- three hundred miles, and not exceeding four hundred miles	0	1	4
- four hundred miles, and not exceeding five hundred miles	0	1	6 1-4
- five hundred miles, and not exceeding six hundred miles	0	1	9
- six hundred miles, and not exceeding seven hundred miles	0	2	0
- seven hundred miles, and not exceeding eight hundred miles	0	2	2 1-2
- eight hundred miles, and not exceeding nine hundred miles	0	2	5
- nine hundred miles, and not exceeding one thousand miles	0	2	8

The above rates to be paid in lawful money, of this colony, and are for the postage of a single letter. They are to be doubled for all double letters, trebled for all treble letters; and for every ounce weight, four times so much is to be charged as for a single letter.

It is further voted and resolved, that Mr. Peter Mumford be, and he is hereby, appointed the post rider from Newport to Providence; and Mr. Benjamin Mumford the post rider from Newport to New London; and that they neither receive nor deliver any letters from any post office

heretofore established in this colony.

It is further voted and resolved, that Messrs. Joshua Babcock, John Jenckes, William Bradford and Joseph Anthony, be, and they are hereby, appointed a committee, to agree with the post masters and post riders, for their service; and to give directions for the setting off and returns of the post riders; and that the post masters account to the said committee for what they shall receive.

It is further voted and resolved, that all letters which the post rider for the time being, may receive, directed for the town of Boston, shall be first post paid, and submitted to the examination of the commander in chief of the American forces, at Cambridge, or of a committee that may be appointed by the provincial congress of the Massachusetts Bay, before they are permitted to go into Boston; and that all letters coming out of Boston, be submitted to the like examination.

And be it further voted and resolved, that this act shall continue in force until this Assembly shall make some further order relative to the same."

The preseding pages give a rough picture of the important role the Committees of Correspondence played in the rebirth of the postal system in the form of a truly American institution.

S. Piscataway - Piscataqua

Alex.L.ter Braake

At the time of writing it is almost exactly two centuries ago that a large Philadelphia business organization ran into financial difficulties. Its overextended territory of action touched the Saint Lawrence River in the north, the Gulf of Mexico in the south, and the mid-section of the Mississippi River in the west. When the business went defunct the government of Pennsylvania sequestered the firm's papers, including its correspondence, and finally deposited the entire collection in the State's archives. This extensive correspondence has proved to be a source of highly interesting historical documentation, but especially a rewarding hunting ground for the postal history researcher.

Several of the letters were worth studying in detail. One of them led to a discovery which is the subject of this short narrative. It was written in Quebec on August 16, 1763, a few months after the Treaty of Paris was signed whereby France ceded all claims to Acadia and Canada to England. According to the address on this letter's cover its destination was Philadelphia.

When glancing through these Harrisburg files this particular letter's cover immediately hit the eye because of the boldly penned postmark. It read "Pisa", followed by a 8.8 rating. This cover is listed in Part II as NH 2.

"Pisa" ! No record could be found of this strange town mark, except pobably in Italy. The thought was discarded without hesitation.

While considering the route the letter could have followed from Quebec to Philadelphia only two possibilities seemed likely: the land route via Montreal, Albany and New York was one; the other a voyage by ship down the St. Lawrence River and then by sea to some Atlantic port from where the postal service would have assumed responsibility for the final delivery.

The overland route to New York and on to Philadelphia at that time was passable, as shown by two letters (Part II, NY 3, and Q-7) from Quebec and Montreal, even though military operations had barely stopped. But there were no towns along this road which could possibly explain the "Pisa" postmark. Moreover the covers just quoted clearly indicate that Albany and New York markings of some kind could have been expected on any letters that went from Canada to a Philadelphia destination.

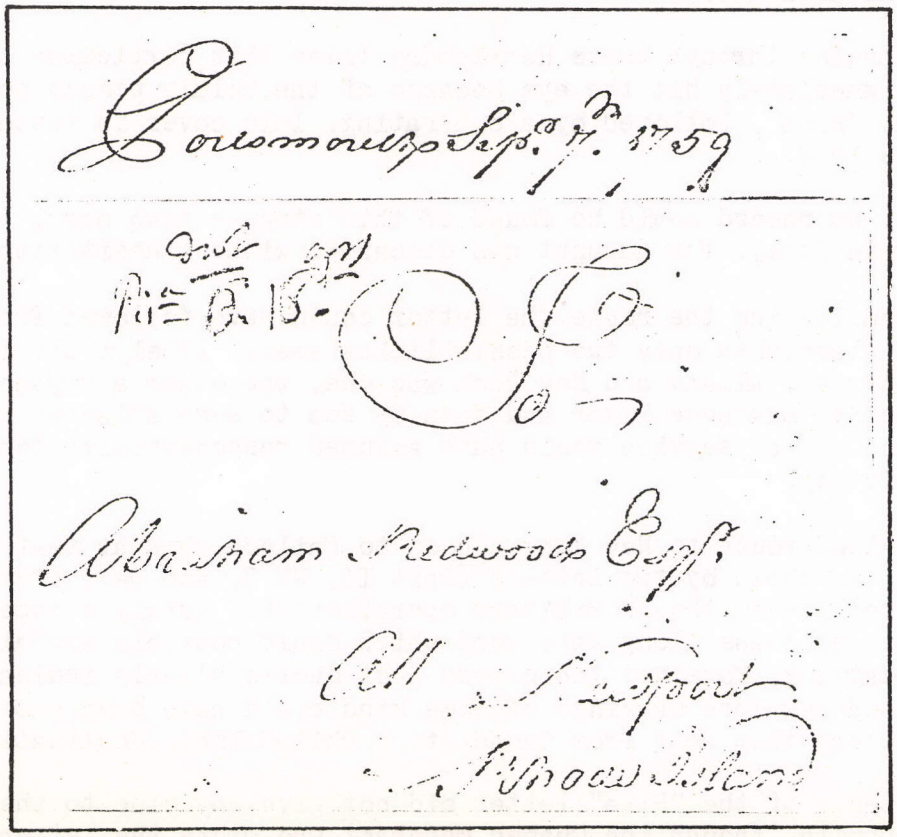
The contents of the "Pisa" letter did not give any clue to the solution of the puzzle, though the Quebec merchant who wrote the letter appeared to be familiar with overseas correspondence since he mentioned the

shipping of his merchandise to the West Indies.

The only other marking on the cover was a rate of 8 pennyweights and 8 grains of silver. This proved to be of considerable help. In the first place they differed considerably from the rates on the overland letters to the same address, the single letter and the triple one.

A broadside issued by Benjamin Franklin, the Deputy Postmaster General, from his Boston office in 1753 listed the rate for a single letter from that city to Philadelphia as 7 dwts (see Chapter on Postal Rates). This would leave one pennyweight and 8 grains of silver for mailing the letter from whatever Atlantic port the letter was brought into to Boston. A number of New England port towns would fit the requirement. The largest of them was Portsmouth, N.H. But how could a "Pisa" town marking have been applied to this letter in any of these places ?

It then was remembered that the names Piscataway and Piscataqua often were mentioned in publications on American postal history as substitutes for Portsmouth. J.W.Sampson's "United States Postage Rates" recorded the 1693 rate from Piscataqua to Boston, and Harry M.Konwiser in his "Colonial and Revolutionary Posts" speaks of "the great Post Road from Piscataway village, near Portsmouth, in the north of Massachusetts colony passing through Boston and New York (pp. 23-24).



S-1. Portsmouth, Sept. 7th, 1759, date line on letter. Postmarked Pisa, 0 dwt, 16 grs. To Newport. (Newport Historical Society).

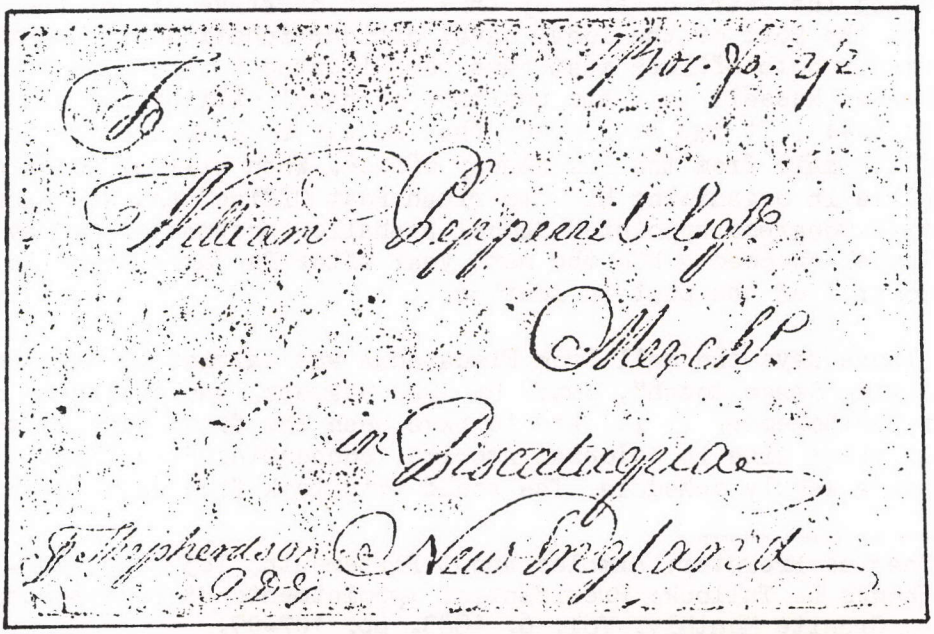
However, the fact that these names were used, apparently as substitutes for Portsmouth, or for a village near the port city on the Piscataqua River, did not sound sufficiently convincing to accept "Pisa" as its official town mark.

A local search was made which disclosed that the New Hampshire Gazette of the sixties made references to the Port of Piscataway and to the Custom House of Piscataqua from where incoming and outcoming vessels were reported. But then again the name Portsmouth appeared just as often as the other two in contemporary postal literature.

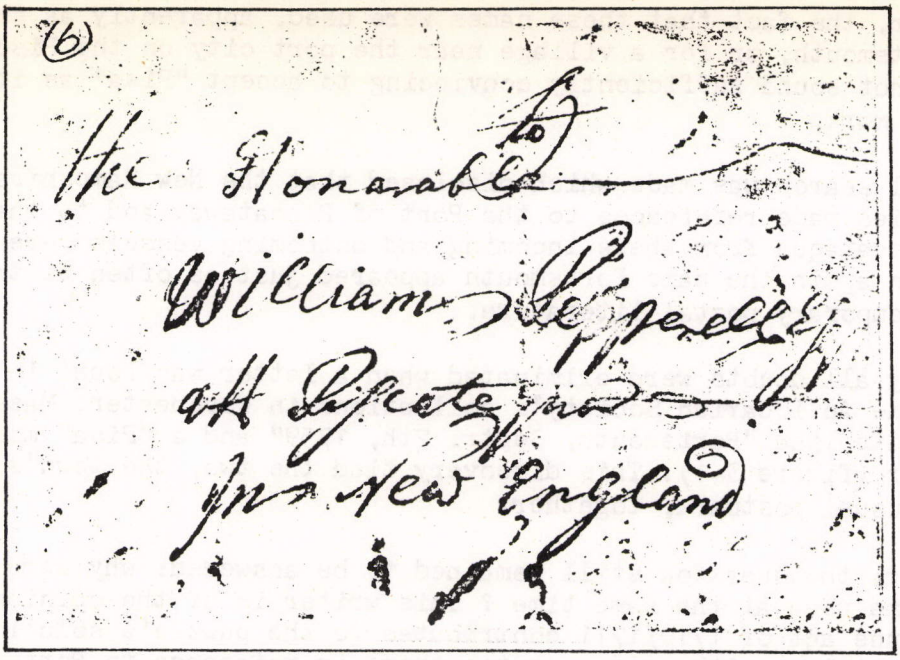
Finally all doubts were eliminated when a letter was found in the archives of the Antiquarian Society's collections in Worchester, Mass. It carried a date line "Portsmouth, Septr. 7th, 1759" and a "Pisa" marking on the cover (figure S-1). This discovery tied the two, the town's name and this unusual postmark, together.

However, the question still remained to be answered: why were more than one name used at the same time ? This writer is of the opinion that the Queen Anne act of 1710/1711 contributes to the puzzle's solution. In its section dealing with postage rates there is reference to Portsmouth as the "Chief Town in New Hampshire", and to "Piscataway as the Chief Office". Apparently there was a clear distinction between the town and its post office as far as names were concerned. It seems to have been one of the numerous anomalies in American postal nomenclature where a town's name and that of its post office were different. For example during the better part of the 19th century the official name of the post office in Charleston, West Virginia, was Kanawha Court House, a name which without exception was part of the city's postmark.

Two letters have been located in the files of the Portsmouth public



S-2. Bos(ton) ship letter, August 23, 1735, to Piscataqua. Rate 2 shill. 2 d. (Portsmouth Historical Society).



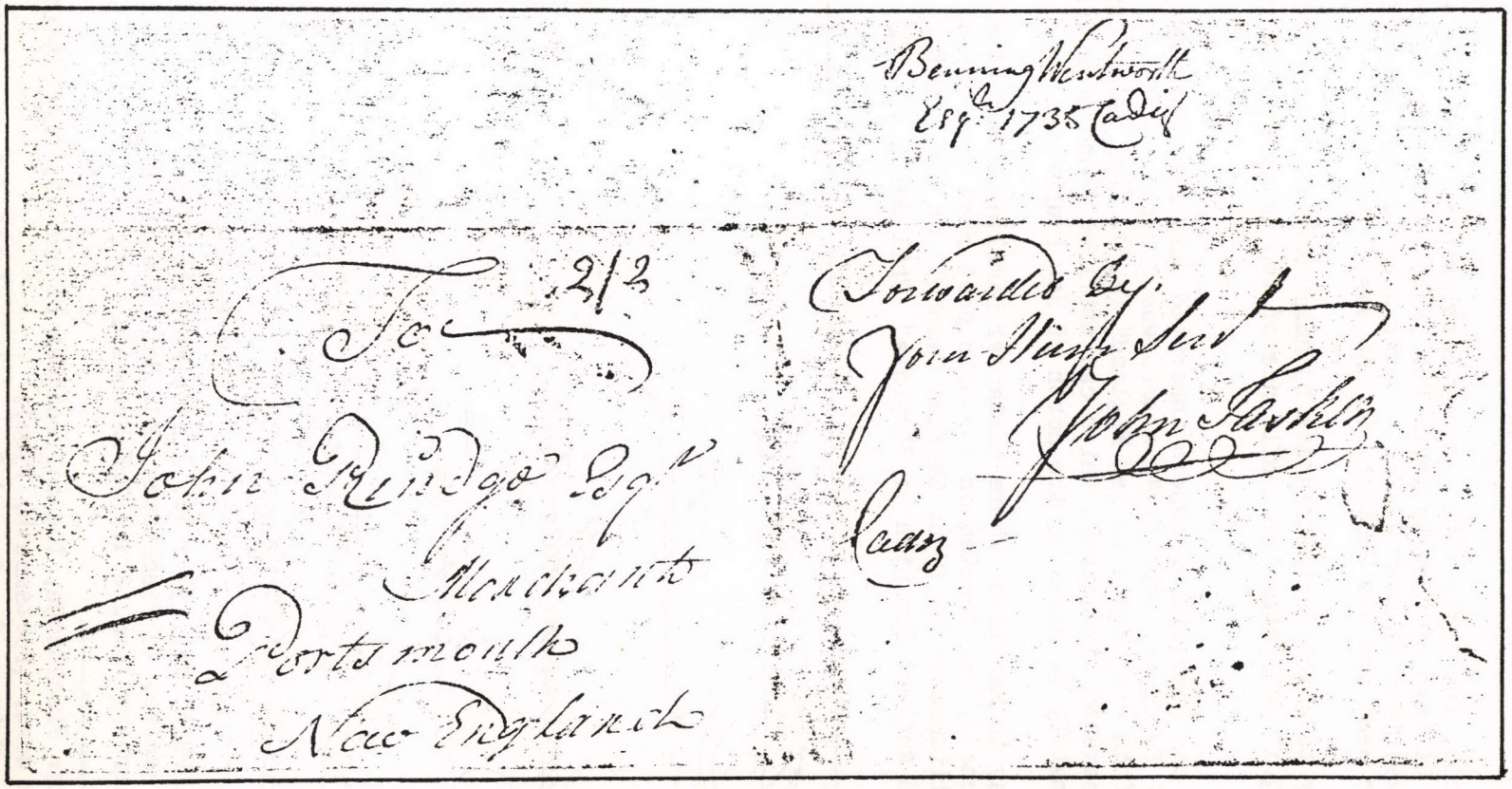
S-3. Origin of letter unknown. 1742. To Piscataqua. (Portsmouth Historical Society).

library which were addressed to Piscataqua in New England. They are shown in figures S-2 and S-3, and were mailed in 1753 and 1742 respectively. The dual name of Portsmouth appears on the address side of a third letter. It originated in Cadiz, Spain (figure S-4) and was forwarded from Boston to the New Hampshire port city in the same year as the one exhibited in figure S-2.

During the years covered by this short narative either the collector of the port or the local naval officer functioned as postmaster. Consequently both offices must have been located in the same building. Eleazer Russell held the position of naval officer for a number of years (s-1). It may be assumed that he was responsible for the handling of the mail from the Piscataway office. When William Goddard became active in organizing his "American Post Office" the New Hampshire Provincial Congress appointed Samuel Penhallow postmaster on May 18, 1775. Russel succeeded him the next year after Benjamin Franklin had taken control of the post in America.

In those days the mail from Piscataqua was carried by the "Portsmouth Flying Stage Coach", owned by John Stavers, and driven by his brother Bartholemew. It is said to have been the first regular mail carrying stage line in colonial America, connecting Piscataway with Boston on a weekly schedule. The round trip took five days (s-2).

(s-1) Charles Brewster: Rambles about Portsmouth, 1859, pp. 227-30.
(s-2) Thomas L. Tullock: Presidential Appointments at Portsmouth. The Granite Monthly, Vol. 6, 1883. pp. 107-09.



S-4. Cadiz, Spain. 1735. Forwarded from Boston to Portsmouth. Rated: 2 shill. 2 d. (Portsmouth Historical Society).

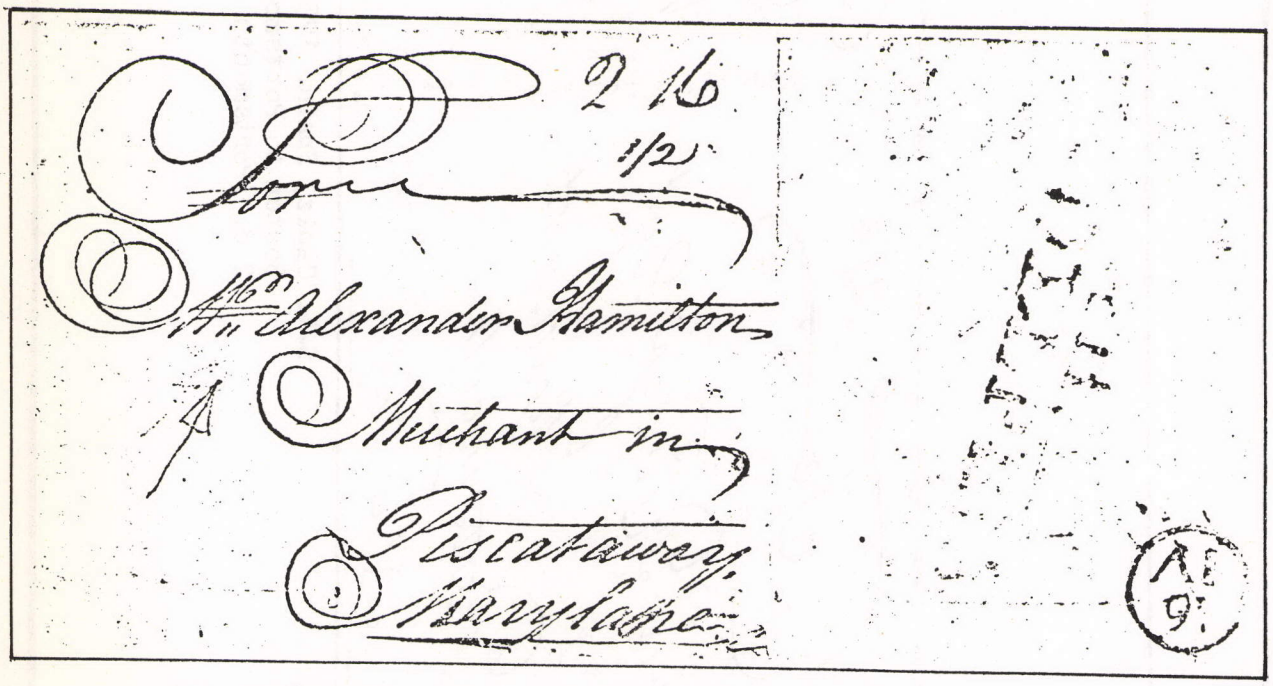
Piscataway and Piscataqua were not the only 17th and 18th century names for the New Hampshire port city. Volume 25 of the New Hampshire State papers reports "this territory was granted for a township by the Council of Plymouth in 1631, and was called Piscataqua and Strawbery Banke."

Herman Moll, the early 18th century cartigrapher, used the name Piscataway on his map of "New England, New York, New Jersey and Pensilvania" (1729) (See Chapter C) for a large area located between New England in the west and New Scotland in the east.

According to a scholarly treatise by Ralph May (s-3) the Indian name "Piscataqua" indicates the confluence of two or more major rivers.

At least one township elsewhere inherited the name Piscataway. On the 16th of December, 1666 (s-4) a town was founded in New Jersey by "settlers from Piscataqua in New England" (s-5). They later changed their town's name to Piscataway, which can still be found on modern maps, approximately 10 miles to the north of New Brunswick.

Piscataway in Maryland, where Alexander Hamilton lived (figure S-5) as a merchant, was located on the main post road from Philadelphia to Williamsburg in 1738. Charles Campbell in his "History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia" (Philadelphia, 1860) p.



S-5. PHILA/DELPHIA, red, 53 x 16, Bishop mark 16/IV(ne), 1772, all on reverse, to Piscataway, Md. Rate 2 dwts, 6 gr. Local currency 1 sh. 2 d. (C.F.Meroni).

(s-3) Ralph May: Piscataqua, the correctness of use and the meaning of the word. (Portsmouth, 1966).
(s-4) Leaning & Spicer: Grants and Concessions (Philadelphia, 1752-3) p. 42.
(s-5) William A. Whitehead: History of Perth Amboy (N.Y.) 1856, p.405.

284, speaks of a battle near "the Fort on the north bank of the Piscataway (Creek)" with the Piscataway Indians. This would indicate that there is no relation between Maryland's Piscataway and its New Hampshire name sake.

Finally a place Piscataway was located in Virginia, approximately where the present Essex County seat of Tappahannock has been built on the south bank of the river of that name. It can be found on Herman Moll's map of Maryland and Virginia of 1729 (s-6).

(s-6) Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe: The Colonial Posts in the United States of America, 1606-1783 (London, 1967), inside of back cover.

T. New York's Fate in 1776

Alex.L.ter Braake

The year was 1776. Lexington and Concord had passed into History, and so had the hopeless expedition into Canada under Montgomery and Arnold, the heroic battle of Bunker Hill and the British evacuation of Boston. A new aspect was developing. The King's men-of-war and a convoy of troop ships ominously appeared on the horizon and anchored in the Narrows. Fifty-two warships, 427 transports and a force of 34,000 troops under the command of the Howe brothers, the admiral and the general, had crossed the Atlantic to teach the American rebels a lesson.

The patriots' morale in the city was sinking in spite of George Washington's leadership. As one dismayed New Yorker expressed it: "The whole world seems leagued against us. Enemies on every side, and no friends arrive." (t-1) A sizeable portion of the continental army and thousands of militia men, including their leader, found themselves bottled up on Manhattan island.

For a moment the news from Philadelphia put some heart into the embattled men. When on July 9th the dispatch arrived announcing that America had declared itself independent and George Washington read the declaration to the people a cheerful cry went up in the city. Men and women who believed in the patriotic cause - though there were not too many in New York - flaunted their temporary happiness in the face of the surrounding enemy. The King's Arms were torn down and trampled under foot. But their spirits, momentarily high as they were, did not last.

George Washington fully realized that the city could not be held. The danger existed that he himself would be captured before he could prove his valor. When two warships, the H.M. ROSE and PHOENIX, braved the fire from American batteries, located on both sides of the Hudson River, and succeeded in running the gauntlet all the way to the wide section known as the Tappan Zee (figure T-1) the general perceived the enemy's plan to prevent any relief action by patriot forces operating in the north.

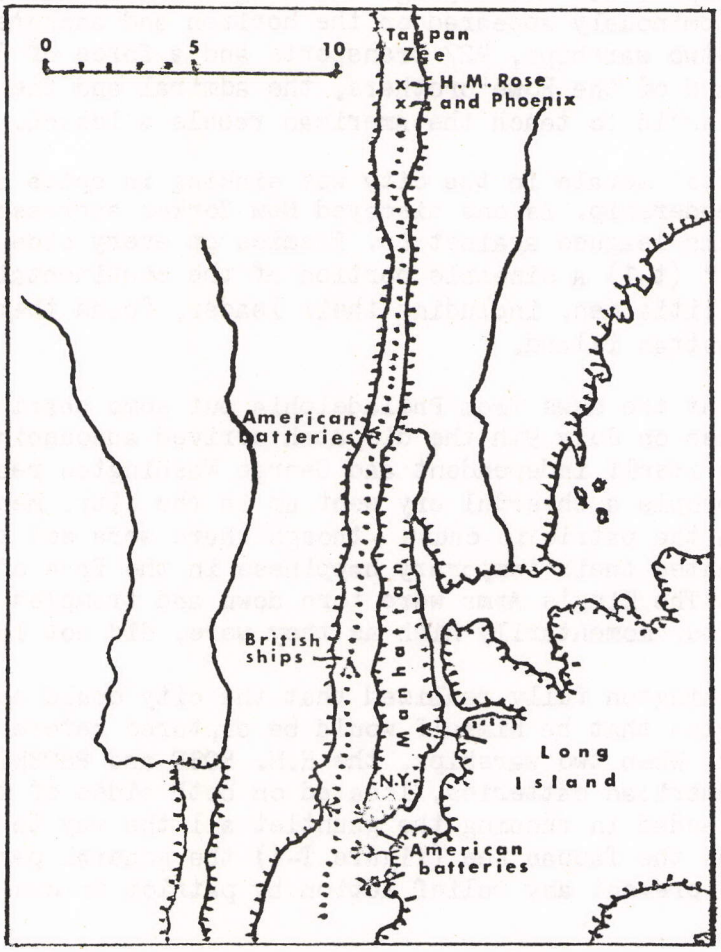
On July the 15th Washington from his headquarters (t-2) directed a letter to the Governor of Rhode Island in which he explained the situation in the following words:

(t-1) John Miller: Triumph of Freedom (1946).
(t-2) Located at the corner of present-day Charlton and Varick streets.

Head Quarters New York, 15th July, 1776.

Dear Sir,

Since my last Two of the Enemies Ships, one of Forty the other twenty Guns, taking advantage of a strong Wind and Tide pas'ed us notwithstanding a warm fire from our Batteries, they now lie in Taupan Sea between Twenty and thirty Miles up Hudson River, where no Batteries from Shore can molest them. Their Views no doubt are to cut off all Communication between this and Albany by water, which they effectively will do. If the Gundaloes, Row Gallies etc. from Providence and Connecticut were here I should think of making their Station uncomfortable. If possible I must request they may be sent on, as soon as conveniently may be. I have wrote Governor Trumbull (of Connecticut), requesting the same of him. It is not unreasonable to suppose these ships have a number of hands



T-1. July 12, 1776. Admiral Howe's ships H.M.ROSE and PHOENIX passed the American Batteries and anchored in the Tappan Zee.

of the disaffected on the North River and in the back parts of the Province when a favorable Opportunity may offer for their making use of them against us. I am sorry to say their numbers by the best information I can get are great ...

We have one large Row Galley compleated and another which will be ready by the time those arrive from Providence and Connecticut. The whole when collected will be sufficient to Attack the two Ships up the River, if no material Alteration between this time and their Arrival. The Channel they now lie in is so narrow they cannot work their guns to Advantage. Lord Howe arrived on Fryday last - his Fleet cannot be far of - I have the Honor to be with Esteem Sir,

Yo. Most Hume. Serv.

Govr. Cooke

G. Washington"

Figure NY 15 in Part II depicts the address side of this letter.

The New York post office, which sent it off, had gone through a hectic time.

When in 1753 Benjamin Franklin succeeded Alexander Spotswood as one of the two Postmasters General of the American colonies, he found the Manhattan post office occupied by a young man who appeared to be an appointee of his prominent father, the President of New York's Governor's Council, Cadwallader Colden. Whether his son, Alexander Colden, officially had been assigned the postmastership is uncertain, but in June, 1753 Franklin decided to give him that responsibility.

The new postmaster began his career by issueing the following announcement:

"New York, June 30, 1753.

The Post Office will be removed on Thursday next to the House of Alexander Colden, opposite Bowling Green, in Broadway, where the Rev. Mr. Pemberton lately lived, here letters will be received and delivered out every day (Saturday afternoons till the arrival of the posts and Sundays excepted) from 8 A.M., till 12, and from 2 until 4 P.M., except post nights, when attendance will be given until 10 o'clock of the night. And all letters for persons living in town that remain uncalled for on post nights will on Monday morning be sent out by a penny post to be provided for that purpose. (t-3)

N.B. - No credit for the future will be given for postage.

ALEXANDER COLDEN

Deputy Postmaster."

(t-3) See Chapter D for more on the Penny Post.

The last sentence of this statement (t-4) must have shocked quite a few New Yorkers, because cash payment of postage had always been a problem, due to the shortage of small coins in the colonies.

It was the first time the city's post office was given a definite location. Later, in 1766, it moved to "the home occupied by Capt. Robinson on Stone street (the only paved street at that time) opposite the fort." According to the New York Mercury of July 8, 1776, it moved to a house "Lately occupied by Mrs. Ferrare, in Maiden Lane, about midway between the Fly Market and the Broadway." It is very likely that this list of New York post office locations is far from complete.

Alexander Colden continued to be New York's postmaster until shortly before the tragic events of 1774 occurred. He became Secretary to John Foxcroft, who was then functioning as Deputy Postmaster General for the northern district together with Hugh Finlay. At his death on December 12, 1774 Colden's son, Richard Nicholls Colden succeeded him in the secretarial chair, and John Antill manned the New York post office.

It was shortly after the new year had begun that the relatively quiet atmosphere prevailing around this office was disturbed. On Sunday, April 23, the news from Lexington reached the city. Immediately people took to the streets. Soon a state of anarchy prevailed. "The posts were stopped and the letters read" (t-5), in order to find out who could be trusted and who not.

A few months earlier the post office came under serious criticism by William Goddard and New York did not remain unaffected when this ex-postmaster made a concerted effort to replace the Parliamentary postal system in America by what he called the Constitutional Post. This postal revolt perfectly fitted the political situation. Soon it gained a foothold on Manhattan, as it did in a number of other colonies. In May Governor Colden complained that a local committee had taken over the supervision of the mail and had assumed the whole power of government. John Holt, a local printer, who had been a postmaster elsewhere, opened a second post office in the city, boldly in competition with the British. He operated it from the printery on Water street, near the coffee house (t-6).

But Goddard's creation did not survive, at least not in the form he had given it. On July 25, 1775, the Second Continental Congress, then assembled in Philadelphia, decided to assume the responsibility for the country's postal services and appointed Benjamin Franklin postmaster general. Though this decision was a step in the right direction, for the time being it created more confusion in New York. The British postmaster, John Antill did not surrender his postal authority, John Holt held out as a postmaster under the constitutional system, Ebenezer Hazard was appointed postmaster for the Province of New York, and the man at the top in Philadelphia was considering the appointment of the responsible person for the city under his administration.

(t-4) Stamps, November 20, 1937. p. 278.
(t-5) The American Revolution in New York. Division of Archives and History, State of New York. 1926, p. 38,
(t-6) American Archives, 4th Series, Volume II. p. 537.

Both Ebenezer Hazard and John Holt were candidates for the position. Holt prepared a statement which he addressed to the Convention of Deputies for New York in which he listed his qualifications for the job, and expounded his political beliefs in a manner similar to that of a candidate for elective office in today's electioneering. Hazard on the other hand petitioned the Provincial Congress for their support. By a vote of 12 to 6 New York decided to recommend Hazard for the important position. On August 3, 1775 Franklin informed the nominee of his forthcoming appointment in the folowing words:

"Sir:

I received your application to be appointed Postmaster of New York, and have seen a recommendation by your Provincial Congress, to which I shall pay due respect by appointing you accordingly as soon as Commissions and Instructions can be printed, & things got in Readiness to carry this Post through. In the mean time I wish to receive from you an Account of the present State of its Management, as far as is within your Knowledge; and am, Sir,

Your most obedient
humble servant
B. Franklin."

And thus on September 21, 1775 Ebenezer Hazard became Deputy Postmaster of the City of New York (figure T-2). Under the conditions prevailing in the northern colonies his position was no sinecure. He had barely received his commission when the Postmaster General by his letter of September 25, 1775 instructed him "to establish speedily a Post to Albany, as we have an Army on your Frontier."

Within a very short time the New York postal system first under Holt, then under Hazard, had absorbed the entire letter traffic. Under those circumstances Mr. Antill, the British postmaster, decided to dismiss his riders in May, since there was no more work for them. On December 25th he closed his office and retired to a war-ship at anchor in the harbor, from where he tried to conduct his duties.

The new postmaster placed the following announcement in Rivingston's New York Gazetteer of November 16, 1775:

"Notice is hereby given,

That a Constitutional Post-Office is established in this city, by the postmaster general of all the united colonies on the continent of North America, from whence the following Posts are regularly gispatched:

To Philadelphia, on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.
To Albany, on Thursday.

T-2. (American Philosophical Society).

By AUTHORITY *of the* CONGRESS.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, ESQ;

Appointed POST-MASTER-GENERAL *of all the* UNITED COLONIES *on the* CONTINENT *of* NORTH-AMERICA.

TO ALL to whom these Presents shall come, sends GREETING: KNOW YE, That I, the said BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, having received good Testimony of the Fidelity and public Spirit of Ebenezer Hazard, of the City of New-York Gentleman and reposing great Trust and Confidence in the Knowledge, Care and Ability of the said Ebenezer Hazard to execute the Office and Duties required of a Deputy Post-Master, have deputed, constituted, authorized and appointed, and by these Presents do depute, constitute, authorize and appoint the said Ebenezer Hazard to be my lawful and sufficient Deputy, to execute the Office of Deputy Post-Master of the City of New York to have, hold, use, exercise and enjoy the said Office, with all and every the Rights, Privileges, Benefits and Advantages, to the same belonging, from the first Day of October next, for the Term of three Years, or until he shall receive a new Commission, or until the present be superseded under such Conditions, Covenants, Provisoes, Payments, Orders and Instructions, to be faithfully observed, performed and done, by the said Deputy, and Servants, as he or they shall, from time to time, receive from me, or by my Order. In Witness whereof, I, the said BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, have hereunto set my Hand, and caused the Seal of my Office to be affixed: Dated the twenty first Day of September, 1775.

B Franklin

T-6

To Hartford, in Connecticut, on Thursday.
To New-London, Newport, and Providence, on Monday.
The Hartford and New-London Posts convey Letters and Packets as far to the Eastward as Portsmouth, in New Hampshire.

EBENEZER HAZARD, Post-Master.

N.B. the Office is kept at Noel and Hazard's, near the Coffee House.

This may have been the last issue of Mr. Rivingston's newspaper for quite some time because one week later Connecticut patriots raided Rivingston's printing press and carried off the type. His sympathy for the British was widely known.

The effect these developments had on the operation of the transatlantic mail system has been discussed in Chapter F. Both the events in New York city and the occupation of Boston by British military forces necessarily caused irregularities in the packet service.

The turbulence of the time is reflected in the great variety of town markings which were applied to the New York mail. Within a span of twenty months no less than eight different markings were in use, two of them in manuscript, and in a diversity of inks: black, red and blueish green. Shortly after British troops occupied the city letters to England were sent off with no postal markings at all.

A tabulation of these markings is presented on the next page. It is a condensation of data obtained from thirty-five pieces of mail, mainly cover-copies which are on file, partly reported by E.N.Sampson (t-7).

The postal historian is anxious to try his hand on the interpretation of this material, however, in spite of the relatively large number of items available for study a completely satisfying coordination of the markings with the historical events remains difficult. Nevertheless one is able to draw some conclusions from the evidence on hand.

The type A New York marking in black ink had been in use for some time when serious unrest began spreading in many of the colonies following the signing of the Boston Port Bill as the main political event of 1774. Why the postmaster in the following year decided to switch to an other design of handstamp, and to markings in red ink, is unclear. A ship letter from Jamaica to Newport, R.I., which is on file, passed New York on February 20, 1775, seems to be one of the earliest to carry the new marking. It is unlikely that the change-over from A to B was influenced by the opening of a provisional post office by the Goddard forces. A letter written by Richard Colden, secretary to the Deputy Postmaster General Foxcroft, dated March 20, carries this type of postmark on its cover, and Colden certainly did not belong to the revolutionary clan.

However, shortly after the events of Lexington and Concord, one

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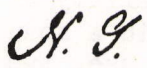
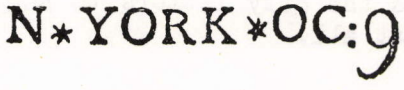
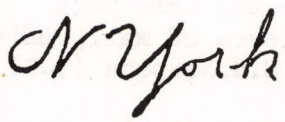
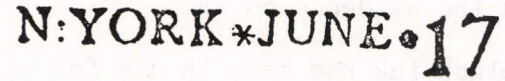
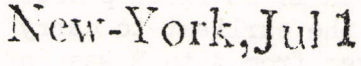
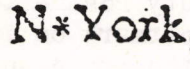
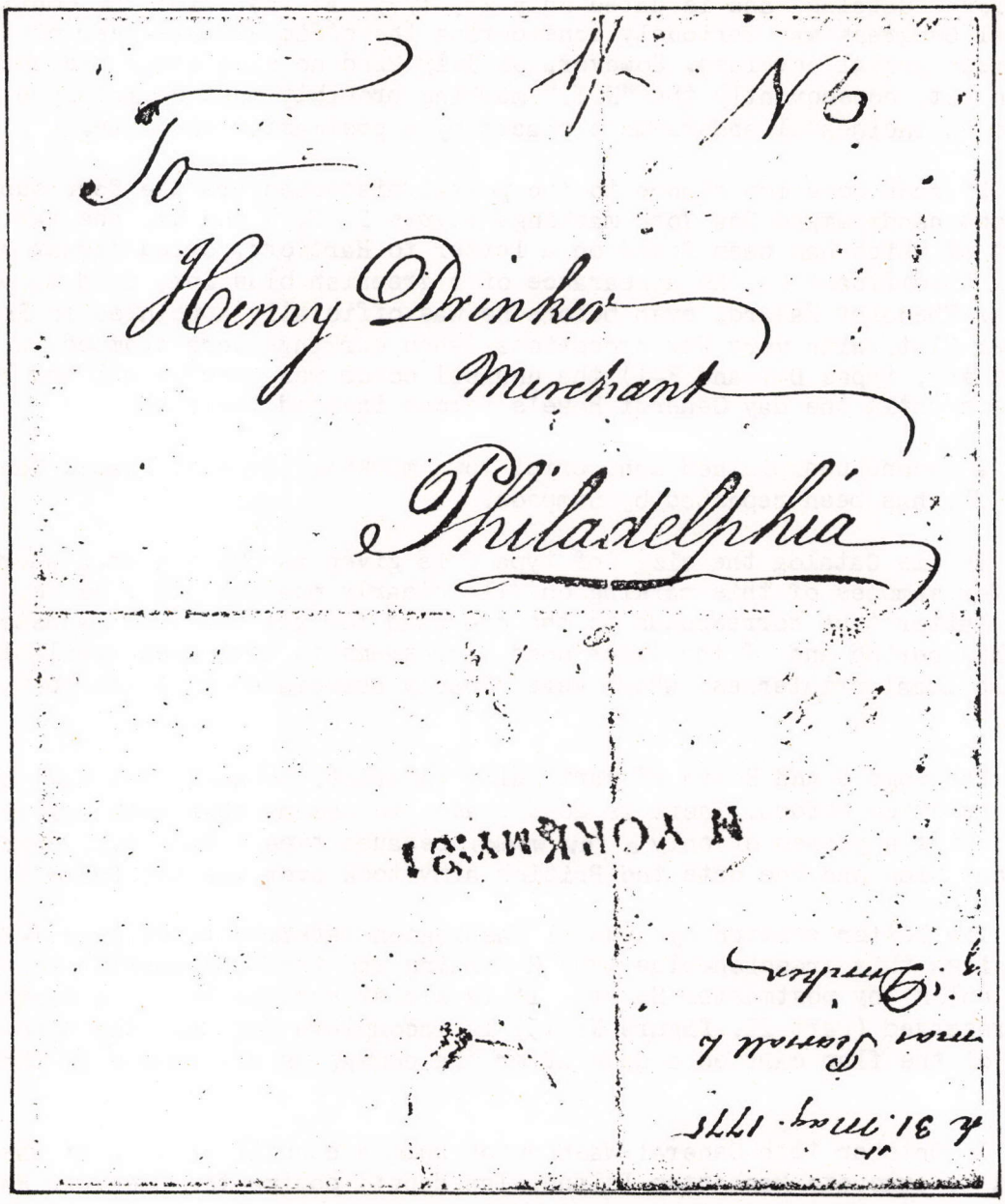
(t-7) E.N.Sampson: American Stampless Cover Catalog. Albany, Ore. 1972. pp. 121, 122.

New York Postal Markings
Used July, 1773 to November 1776

Markings A-F tracings by E.N. Sampson.	Size & Color	Period Used
A	40 x 3 black	7-24-73 to 1-18-75
B	27 x 4½ red	2-20-75 to 12-13-75
C 	manuscript	7-22-75
D 	34 x 4½ blue-green	8-31-75 to 3-16-76
E 	manuscript	3-1-76
D-1 same as D	34 x 4½ black	3-1-76
F 	30½ x 4½ blue-green	2-1-76 to 6-27-76
F-1 same as F	30½ x 4½ black	7-8-76 to 7-12-76
G 	31 x 4½ blue-green	7-1-76
H. 	24 x 4½ blue-green	7-15-76

significant change can be noticed on New York mail. Early in May rates of postage began to be marked in shillings and pence, rather than in Troy currency, which had been the custom before. A perfect example of such a letter is shown in figure T-4.



T-4. N(EW) YORK, red, 27 x 4½, M(A)Y:21, 1775, on reverse, to Philadelphia. Rated N6 (6 pence), 1 shilling local currency. (R.H.Lounsbery).

There seems to be no doubt that John Holt at that time had taken over the management of the New York post office and that he continued to use the handstamp of type B which had been introduced by his predecessor.

The late use of this type of townmark on December 13, 1775, as reported by Sampson, must remain unexplained. Long before that date two other markings appeared on New York mail.

The first of these, a marking in manuscript (type C), appears in the Cover Catalog, and is dated July 22, 1775. At that time the Continental Congress was seriously considering the official take-over of the American postal services. However, on July 22nd no such steps had been taken yet, consequently the "N.Y." marking probably must be interpreted to be an incidental endorsement placed by a postmaster in haste.

Of much more importance to the postal historian are the four subsequent handstamped New York markings (types D, F, G and H), the earliest of which has been found on a letter to Hartford, dated August 31, 1775. Significant is the appearance of a greenish-blue ink, used by postmaster Ebenezer Hazard, even before he was officially appointed on September 21st. With very few exceptions (when markings were stamped in black ink, types D-1 and F-1) the unusual color was used on all New York letters until the day General Howe's forces invaded the city.

A second unexplained manuscript town marking (type E), dated March 1, 1776, has been reported by Sampson.

In his Catalog the size of type F is given as $30\frac{1}{2}$ x 5 mm., whereas the few samples of this marking on file clearly measure $30\frac{1}{2}$ x $4\frac{1}{2}$ mm. This letter type corresponds to the one used for all New York handstamps of this period and of the later ones, and seems to have been available in the local printeries, which were closely associated with the post office.

Markings G and H are of particular interest, because they have not been reported before. There is good reason to assume that both were in use during a period of only a few weeks, because type F was still current at that time and the date the British army took over was not far off.

The letter written by General Washington referred to on page T-2 was given this greenish-blue type H marking and the FREE imprint in the same color by postmaster Hazard. It is almost certain that the postmark as preserved (Part II, figure NY 15) is incomplete and that the torn-off part of the flap carried a date after the comma, as was common in those days.

On October 16th General Washington held a council of war. It was decided to evacuate Manhattan Island. The deputy postmaster Ebenezer Hazard departed with the troops and left the New York office again to his British counterpart, John Antill. Shortly before he left Hazard received a letter from the President of the Congress in Philadelphia, John Hancock, dated July 9, 1776, in which he was informed "that Postmasters while in office (were) to be Excused from all Military Duty." This was a matter of considerable importance for the proper functioning of the postal service under war time conditions. The cover of this letter is depicted in figure A-1 of the Introduction.

General Howe's victory on Manhattan sealed the fate of the city for the following seven years. He found it in chaotic condition and among other things without a properly operating post office. Little is known of the latter's activities under military rule. One piece of evidence has survived, a letter written by a Scottish soldier to his wife, the contents of which and also its cover are dramatically eloquent. He was one of the men held in readiness on the East River shore for an assault on the city. From where this man was located he could overlook the site where nowadays the delegates to the United Nations have their meeting place.

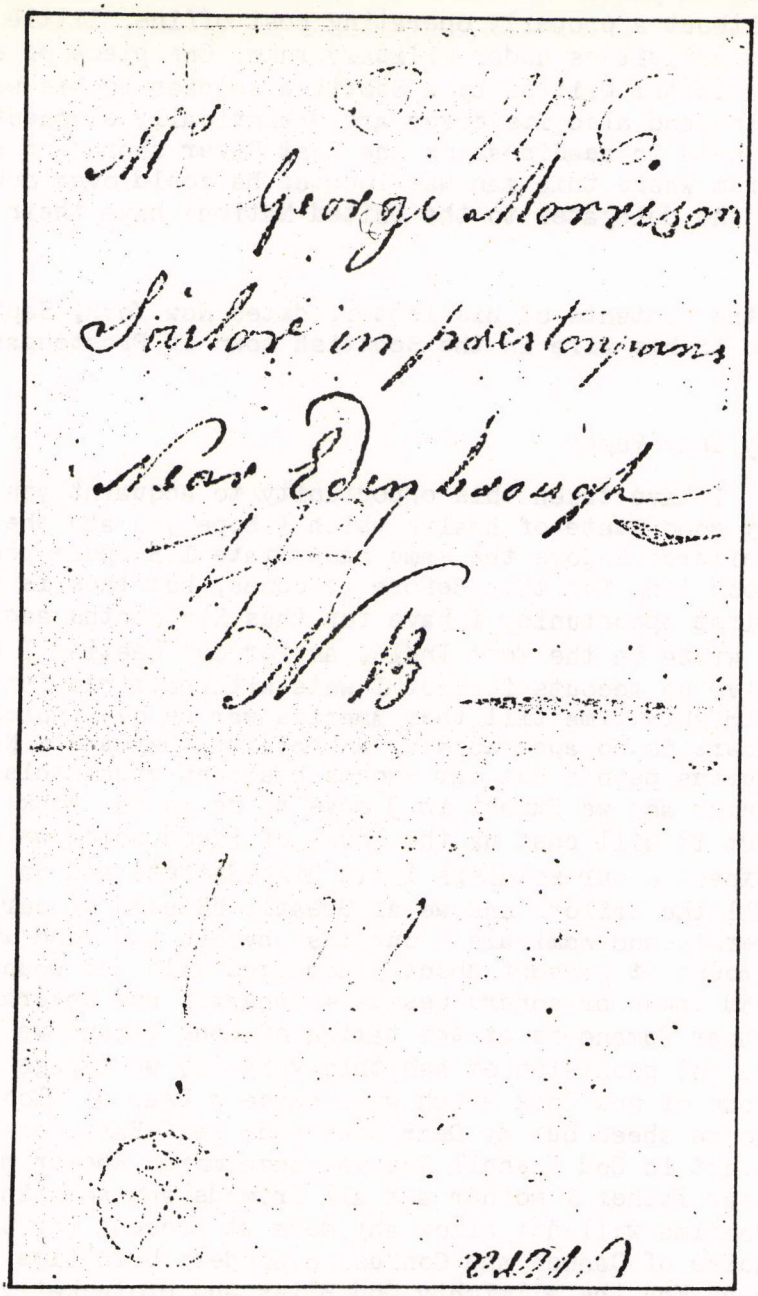
Here are the contents of his letter, dated New York, September 7th, 1776, addressed to his wife in the Scottish town of Prestonpans, near Edinburgh:

"My dear Peggy

I have taken this opportunity to acquaint you of my good State of health which I hope you and the Children Enjoys the same hapy State I Suppose you look long for this Before it comes, but thes is the first opportunity I have for thes Six Months and two I wrote in the West Indie. as for our Meeting I can give no Accouts for but I wate with pattince for the almighty time till thes America war be over which there is no apperance of as yet for they are a Numerous pepole but our Secces has been great this Sumer and we Expect in 3 days to be in New York; but it will cost us the losse of Blood which we must Expect - our soldiers is in high Spirets and So is all the Sailors and we ar Greatly ESteemd by our Generals and admirals - our loss by Sea and land will amount at present about 3 houndred kild and wounded and taken prisoners beside 4 Generals and Several other Comanders at the taking of Long Island we have got possision of and this very day we ingage the town of new York which will cause a Dear of Blood to be sheed but my Dear make your self Easy for i trust in God I shall See you once more. Rmembr me to your father & mother and all friends and aquntince So time will not allow any more at present for the noise of Cannon and Confusion hinders both time and mind May the allmighty God Bliss and protecket you and uors My dear Peggy from your Loveing husband

G. Morrison."

On November the 6th this sailor's letter (figure T-5) passed the London post office, where it was given a Bishop marking on the reverse, and sent on to Scotland. It is suprising that in spite of the confusion which must have reigned in New York during the British take-over this message found its way within a reasonably quick time. It probably was sent by one of the first mails that left Manhattan island after



T-5. New York, September 7, 1776, via London, November 6, Bishop mark, to Prestonpans, Scotland. (University of Michigan).

the American forces gave up the city.

The manuscript transatlantic one shilling rate marking in the lower corner to the left was obliterated in London and upped by six pence domestic charges to Edinburgh. The reverse side of the cover faintly

shows a one shilling seven pence rate marking, the amount Morrison's beloved wife had to pay when the letter was delivered to her. The additional one penny covered the Edinburgh-Prestonpans postal charge.

It was New York's fate to sit out the frustrating years of the war while the other colonies fought their and its independence.

U. An Early American Army Post Office Letter

Alex.L.ter Braake

> "The British government, not chusing to permit the union of the colonies as propos'd at Albany, and to trust that union with their defense, lest they should thereby grow too military, and feel their own strength, suspicions and jealosies at this time being entertain'd of them, sent over General Braddock with two regiments of regular English troops for that purpose. He landed at Alexandria, in Virginia, and thence march'd to Fredericktown, in Maryland, where he halted for carriages." (u-1)

These were Benjamin Franklin's words by which he introduced the stirring story of the British campaign and ultimate defeat before Fort Duquesne in 1755. The role which the Deputy Postmaster General played in this drama is not generally known. A rediscovered letter of the period which passed Franklin's desk caused the author to search for background information which is presented here.

He who thinks of a Postmaster General's position in colonial America as an office job is mistaken. Few government officials spent so much of their time traveling, and so little of it in Philadelphia or New York. Moreover the average history student may envision Franklin to have been extremely busy organizing the colonial postal system shortly after having received his commission from the British government in 1753. One likes to remember him as a diplomat, a newspaper man, a scientist, an inventor, a printer, and a charmeur des dames. He most certainly was all that, and yet he found time to infuse new vigor into the fledgling post office. It is astounding to learn that he was a captain of a military unit in the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, where the carrying of arms was almost a felony, and that during the war years of the fifties he could provide his fellow newspaper publishers with printer's supplies. His correspondence with Peter Timothy in South Carolina, another of the many printer-postmasters of those days, proves that Franklin shipped newsprint to the south as early as 1753. A busy man indeed ! Timothy placed an urgent order for paper which he hoped Franklin was able to send to Charlestown "as soon as you return from Maryland."

Yes, the deputy postmaster general had his hands full in Maryland, but not in that particular capacity. Upon his return to Philadelphia from the important meeting in Albany he found that he had been drafted by the Pennsylvania authorities for the surveying of the roads to be used by General Braddock's expedition against the French and the Indians. Ruth Lapham Butler in her book "Dr. Franklin, Postmaster General" quotes from his own description of the singular task he was entrusted with. He wrote:

(u-1) A.H.Smyth (ed.): The Writings of Benjamin Franklin, Vol. I, (N.Y. 1905-1907), p. 393.

> "Our Assembly apprehending, from some information, that he (the general) had conceived violent prejudices against them (the Pennsylvania authorities) as adverse to the (military) service, wish'd me to wait upon him, not as for them, but as postmaster general, under the guise of proposing to settle with him the mode of conducting with most celerity and certainty the despatches between him and the governors of the several provinces, with whom he must nenessarily have continual correspondence, and of which they propos'd to pay the expense."

In his correspondence with general Braddock the governor of Pennsylvania, Robert H. Morris, expressed great satisfaction that he had found the right man to help out. On May 12, 1755, he wrote:

> "I am glad Mr. Franklin has had success in procuring you a number of horses and waggons and I shall endeavor to make my Assembly bear the charge of these but cannot say I have any warm expectation upon that ... Mr. Franklin will be in town this evening and I detain your messenger till he comes as he may have something to write you of his transactions."

During those days Franklin was in continuous contact with influential men in the Pennsylvania back country, among them Edward Shippen and James Burd. Burd was Shippen's son-in-law and operated a plantation for him in Shippenburg. Both had a "finger on the pulse of international affairs in the Indians' country." (u-2) Shippen was located in Lancaster where he functioned as quartermaster for the road building project. The three men kept a lively correspondence going of which figure U-1 shows a sample. In this letter, dated May 29, 1755, Franklin announced that the governor had been authorized by a Committee of the Legislature an amount of one hundred (Spanish) dollars to be used for the payment of "such Labourers as need is going to work on the Road." He further informed Shippen that "We purpose to send 60 waggon Load of Forage next week to the Camp."

And thus the newly appointed postmaster general was side-tracked from his important postal responsibilities to organize the British army commander's transportation of supllies from the provinces to the battle front. Franklin had never succeeded in convincing the general that the use of packhorses along narrow jungle paths would be much more successful and less costly than building 30 feet wide roads and carrying food and ammunition and other supplies in wagons. The plan called for a warehouse and stockpile at Shippensburg. The British base camp from where the attack on Fort Duquesne was going to be made was located at Turkey Foot. Fortunately James Burd put his experienced shoulder under the job of building the necessary roads (see the map of figure U-2), but even with his leadership the construction program could not be completed in time to rescue the British army from disaster.

A general expense account of the Province of Pennsylvania covering

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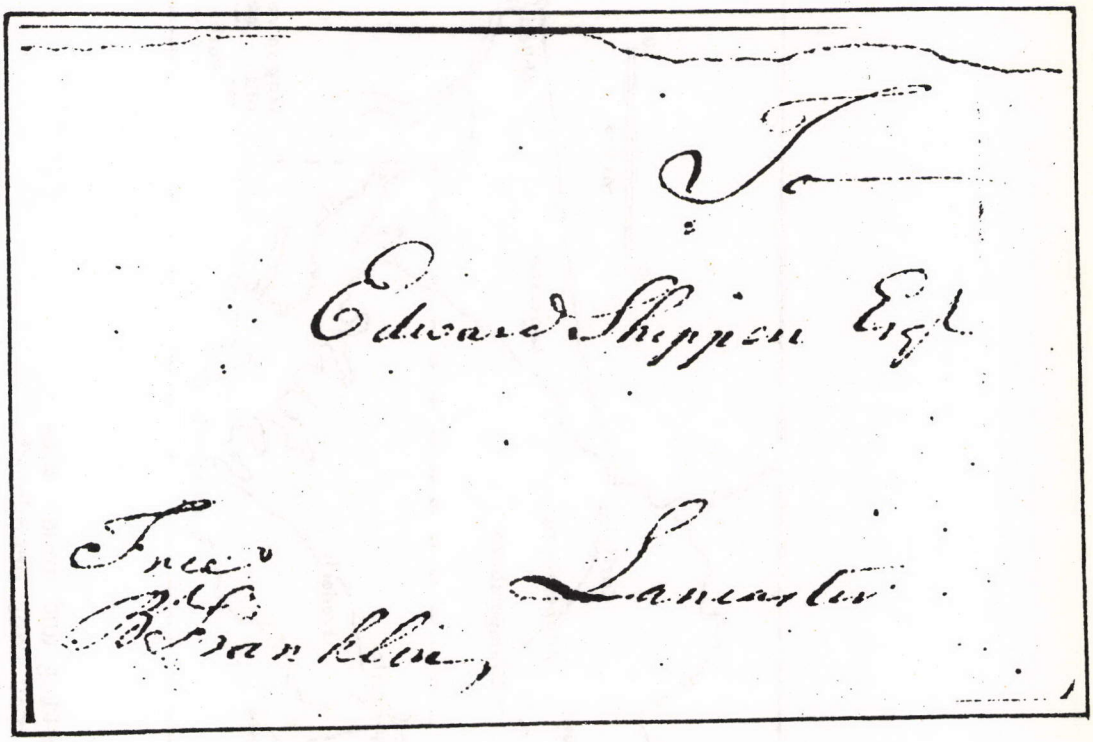
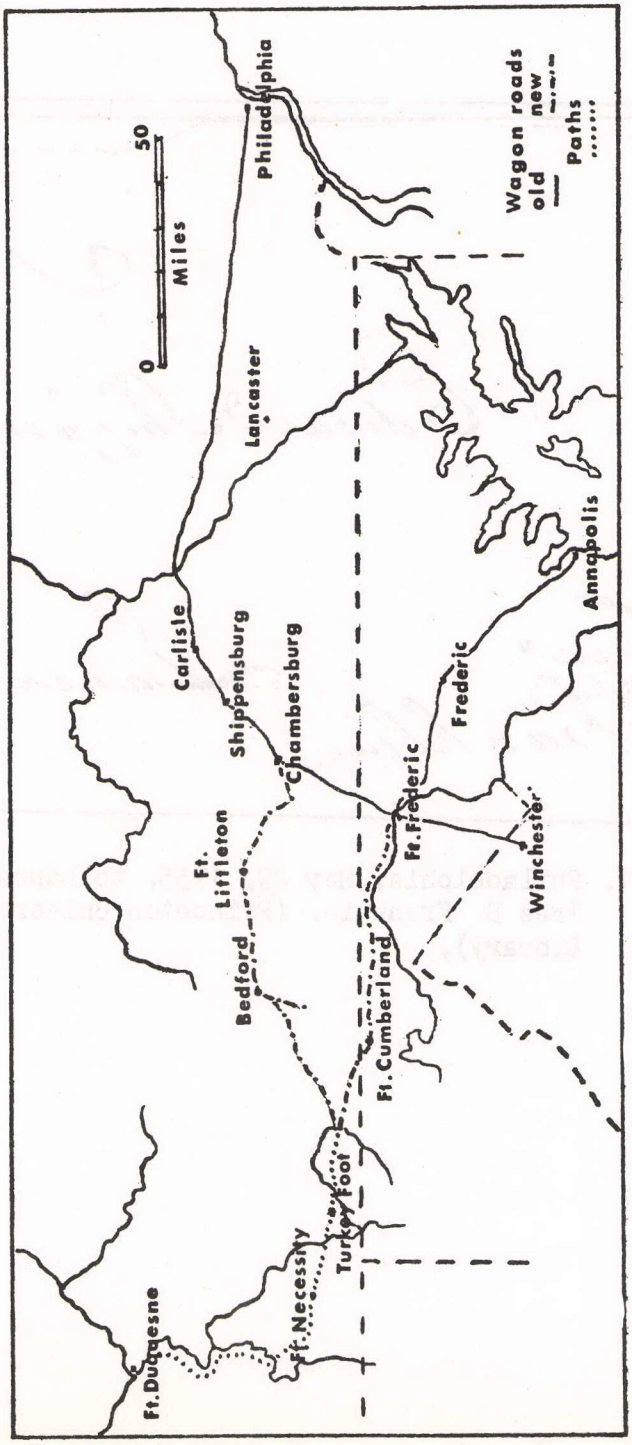
(u-2) The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, 1934. p. 237.



U-1. Philadelphia, May 29, 1755, to Lancaster. Free B. Franklin. (Princeton University Library).

the period of the 14th of October, 1754 to the 30th of September, 1755 mentions a charge of £3,001.1.10 for "cutting a Road for the King's service, at the Instance of General Braddock, from the Western Settlements of this Province towards the Ohio, about 68 Miles, besides several Accounts not yet brought in." (Figure U-3)



U-2. Roads, existing and under construction, for Gen. Braddock's campaign in 1755.

GENERAL EXPENCES *of the Province of* Pennſylvania, *from the* 14*th of* October, 1754, *to the* 30*th of* September, 1755.

				General Expences.
VOTED to *Robert Hunter Morris*, Eſq; Governor, on his Arrival to this Government, *Five Hundred Pounds*,			£. 500 0 0	
For Maintenance and Relief of *French* Deſerters,			46 2 9	
For Maintenance and Preſents to *Indians* in our Alliance,	£ 1,562 19 9			
A Preſent to *Andrew Montour*, in Conſideration of his Loſſes at the Defeat of General *Braddock*,	50 0 0		1,612 19 9	
The Governor's Account of Maintenance of *Indians*, Payment of Expreſſes, *&c.*			564 16 4	
For *Lewis Evans*, towards his Map of this and the adjacent Provinces,			50 0 0	
For Maintenance of Soldiers Wives ſent to this City by General *Braddock*, on his March from Fort *Cumberland*,			45 7 11	
Remittance to the Agents at *London*, for their Salary, and for the Service of the Province,			591 5 0	
Hire of Expreſſes,			21 15 6	
For Proviſions for the King's Troops, in Purſuance of the Orders from Sir *Thomas Robinſon*, one of the Secretaries of State,	£ 5000 0 0			
Proviſions for the King's Forces, requeſted by the Government of the *Maſſachuſetts-Bay*,	10000 0 0			
Proviſions beſides the above, for the King's Uſe,	700 0 0			
			15,700 0 0	
Charge of cutting a Road for the King's Service, at the Inſtance of General *Braddock*, from the Weſtern Settlements of this Province towards the *Ohio*, about 68 Miles; beſides ſeveral Accounts not yet brought in,			3,001 1 10	
For the King's Service, to be ſent to the Inhabitants of *Cumberland* County,			1000 0 0	
Aſſemblymens Wages, Salaries to the Judges of the Supreme Court, the Secretary, Clerk of the Aſſembly, and other public ordinary Expences,			2,353 10 6	
			£ 25,486 19 7	

Account of Blankets, Jackets, Stockings, *&c.* for the Forces under General *Johnſon*, not yet adjuſted.

U-3. Expense account of the Province of Pennsylvania among other things covering road construction for Gen: Braddock's campaign.

Franklin would not have been a postman to the backbone if he had not taken steps to provide the general and his army with a letter mail service from Philadelphia to his head quarters, though the written contact between civil and military offices was largely entertained by the use of express riders. This postal service was continued after Braddock's defeat. It connected George Washington's head quarters in Winchester, Va. with the Philadelphia post office. The colonel commanded a force which had the task of preventing French and Indian troops to penetrate the British colonies to the east.

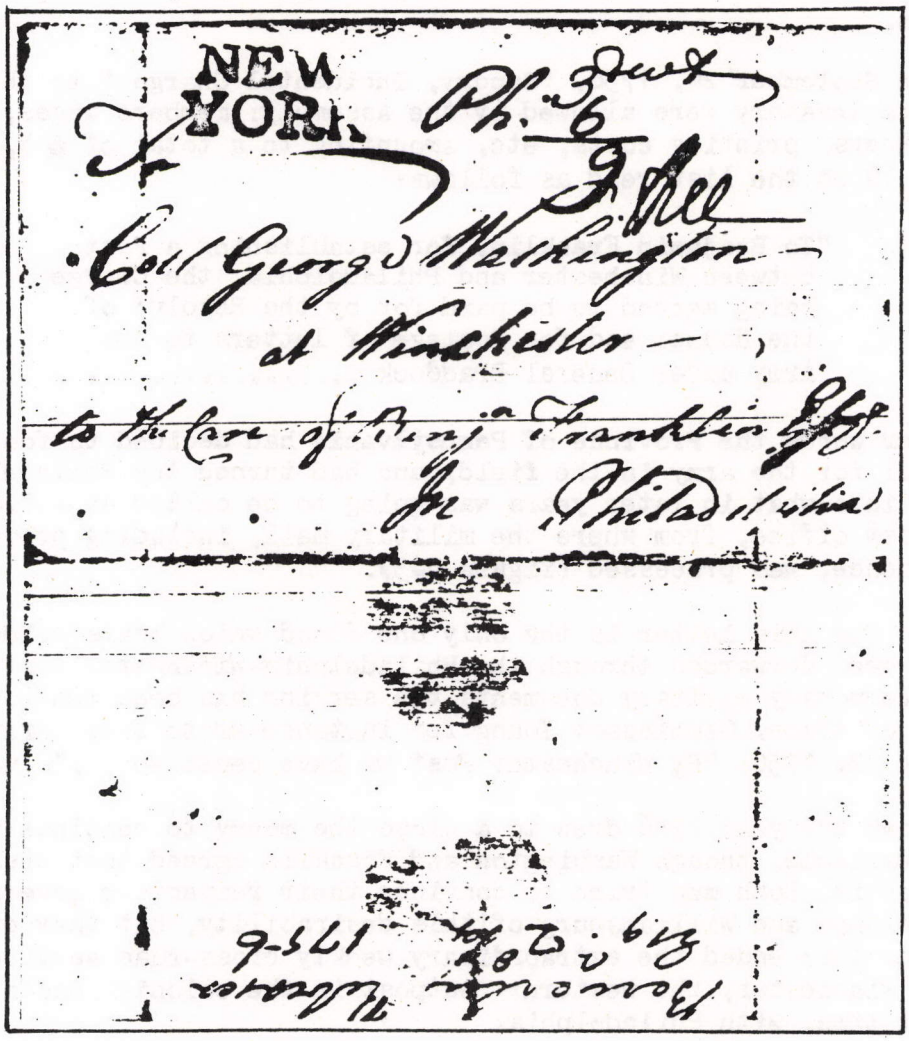
Figure U-4 depicts the cover of a letter from New York, dated September 2, 1756, and addressed to Washington while stationed in Winchester. The document was the subject of an interesting article in the American Philatelist of August, 1928, by Delf Norona (p. 725) which claimed its NEW/YORK postmark to be the oldest handstamped one know to exist at that time. The writer of the article challenged his readers "to come forward with an earlier date." Since then covers have been reported carrying the same marking dated June 17 and August 7, 1756, and maybe others, thus retiring the above mentioned postal item from the F.D.C throne.

Though the letter therefore has lost some of its clamor, it certainly can claim other philatelic features which make it a document of historical significance. Here is a message addressed to Colonel George Washington, 24 years old, who was standing at that time on the lowest step of the stairs that would lead him to the highest level of any American career. At the moment he opened the letter he was faced with an almost desperate situation. Being in command of what was left of Braddock's army, minus British troops which had been transferred to the north, had accepted the burdensome responsibility of stopping the gap and denying the enemy the use of the very roads which had been constructed to fascilitate the British forces, their weapons and supplies to reach the Monongahela river.

When Washington read the message which his New York friend had sent him, his onerous task weighed even heavier on his shoulders, because it brought tidings of another defeat, the loss of Oswego, a British stronghold on Lake Onterio.

Valuable as this letter now may be to the student of colonial history, the postal historian also has good reasons to be delighted to see it brought to light again from the dark and dusty shelves in the Library of Congress. Here is a piece of correspondence which was delivered by the official American postal services to the most western tentable of its growing body. However, Winchester in Virginia never was incorporated in the colonial postal system. Mail service to places located on cross roads was still an exception in those days.

There is yet another important fact which places the document high on the list of philatelic rarities. The address shows that the sender directed it to the expert hands of the postmaster general himself, to Benjamin Franklin, who better than anyone else was familiar



U-4. NEW/YORK, 26 x 12½, black, September 2, 1756 to Winchester, Va. via Ph(iladelphia). 3 + 6 = 9 dwts Free. (Library of Congress).

with the hazardous roads leading to Winchester from the north-east. It is hard for the postal historian to visiualize in detail what happened when this letter arrived in Philadelphia's post office. On departure from New York it had been charged three pennyweights postage and six dwts. were added to this for carrying it from Philadelphia to Winchester. But someone in authority did declare the letter to be "Free" of charge. this fact alone places the letter in a category of its own, the explanation of which is revealed by a study of the Pennsylvania provincial records.

On September 24, 1756, "Sundry, Incidental Charges" to the Pennsylvania Treasury were allowed by the Assembly: members wages, salaries of officers, printing costs, etc. amounting to a total of £ 3,564.15.8½. Number 19 on the list read as follows:

> "To Benjamin Franklin, for establishing a Post between Winchester and Philadelphia, the Charge being agreed to be paid for by the Resolve of the House; and for Postage of letters to the Army under General Braddock ..... 210.13.9½."

In other words the Province of Pennsylvania had decided to foot the postage bill for the army in the field, and had turned the Philadelphia post office into what in later years was going to be called an A.P.O., an army post office, from where the military mail, including private correspondence, was processed (figure U-5).

So far this letter is the only one found which bears evidence of having been forwarded through the Philadelphia-Winchester system. But in contemporary military documents the service has been mentioned a number of times. Commissary Young for instance wrote from Carlisle, Pa. on July 22, 1756: "By Winchester Post we have received ..." (u-3).

When the year 1756 drew to a close the money to continue was no more available, though Washington and Franklin agreed that there was a need for it. Both men tried to convince their respective governments in Philadelphia and Williamsburg of this desirability, but they did not succeed. Thus ended the extraordinary weekly cross-road service which linked Winchester, the westernst outpost in the colonial postal system at that time, with Philadelphia.

It has been reported that during the war against the French and the Indians in 1760 a somewhat similar system was operating out of Boston connecting it with Albany.

(u-3) William A. Hunter: Forts on the Pennsylvania Frontier, 1753-1758. (1960). p. 431.

1756. September 24. Then the ſeveral Certificates and Orders, for Payment of the Members Wages, the Salaries of Officers, and other Incidental Charges, being ſigned by the Speaker, by Order of the Houſe,

The Houſe adjourned to the Thirtieth of this inſtant *September*.

Sundry INCIDENTAL CHARGES, *allowed at the laſt Sitting of* ASSEMBLY.

Sundry Incidental Charges.

TO the Honourable *William Denny*, Eſq; by Order of the Aſſembly,	£	600	0 0
To *William Allen*, Eſq; Chief Judge of the Supreme Court,		200	0 0
To *Lawrence Growdon*, Eſq; ſecond Judge of Ditto,		60	0 0
To *Caleb Cowpland*, Eſq; third Judge of Ditto,		60	0 0
To *Richard Peters*, Eſq; as Clerk of the Council,		15	0 0
To *Charles Brockden*, his Account as Maſter of the Rolls,		11	13 11
To the Members of Aſſembly for their Attendance,		1,319	7 0
To *Benjamin Franklin*, his Account for printing Votes, *&c.*		201	4 3
To *Hannah Boyd*, her Account for *Indian* Expences,		22	19 10
To *Mary Jones*, her Account for the Entertainment,		127	0 0
To *William Franklin*, for Expence paid by him for Ditto,		1	5 0
To Ditto, as Clerk to the Houſe, 133 Days, at *Six Shillings per* Day,		39	18 0
To Ditto, his Account for Tranſcribing, Ingroſſing, *&c.*		173	7 9
To *Samuel Kirke*, his Salary as Serjeant at Arms,		8	0 0
To *Richard Hockley*, his Account for affixing the Great Seal,		9	15 0
To *David Edwards*, for Bruſhes, cleaning the Houſe, *&c.*		7	16 6
To *William Franklin*, for Poſtage of public Letters to Governor *Morris*,		20	0 0
To Ditto for Poſtage of public Letters to Governor *Denny*,		0	18 8
To *Benjamin Franklin*, for eſtabliſhing a Poſt between *Wincheſter* and *Philadelphia*, the Charge being agreed to be paid for by a Reſolve of the Houſe; and for Poſtage of Letters to the Army under General *Braddock*,		210	13 9½
To *David Edwards*, for his Attendance as Door-keeper, 121 Days, at *Four Shillings per* Day,		24	4 0
To *Charles Stow*, for ſummoning Eighty-eight Councils, at *Two Shillings* and *Six-pence* each,		11	0 0
To *William Franklin*, his Account for Poſtage of public Letters to the Secretary,		10	0 0
To the Speaker for immediate Services,		40	0 0
To *Joſeph Fox*, for 28 Days on the Committee of Accounts at *6ſ.*		8	8 0
To *Joſeph Stretch*, for 28 Days on Ditto,		8	8 0
To *John Hughes*, for 28 Days on Ditto,		8	8 0
To *Daniel Roberdeau*, for 28 Days on Ditto,		8	8 0
To *Richard Pearne*, for 28 Days on Ditto,		8	8 0
To *Joſeph Hamton*, for 12 Days on Ditto,		3	12 0
To *Richard Patridge* and *Robert Charles*, each *One Hundred Pounds Sterling*, for their Service as Agents,		345	0 0
	£	3,564	15 8½

U-5. September 24, 1756. Sundry Incidental Charges allowed by the Pennsylvania Assembly, among others "for establishing a Post between Winchester and Philadelphia, and for Postgae of Letters to the Army under General Braddock.

V. The American Bottom

Alex.L.ter Braake

Though many cover collectors in general shop little interest in letters which have not been "transmitted by recognized means" it is a fact that a message written under the primitive circumstances of colonial life at the frontier, whether touches by a post office or not, deserves a place in a documentation such as this. The existance of many privately handled letters proves that there was a need for communication. Often such a flow of letters became sufficiently important to form a stimulant for the establishment of organized contact of a more permanent nature, and eventually for its incorporation into an official communication service. It was the trickle of a few letters here, and a trickle elsewhere that gradually grew to the mighty and well-canalized stream of written messages that became the American postal system.

Therefore it is of interest to consider the communication requirements of a small group of colonists, who, two centuries ago, had settled hundreds of miles away from the more or less civilized areas, from the developed provinces on the Atlantic shore, and how those requirements were met. The American Bottom has been chosen as such a subject for analysis.

When on February 10, 1763 the Treaty of Paris concluded the American phase of the Seven Years' War - in this country known as the French and Indian War - the political map of the North American continent was subjected to great changes. Vast areas and spheres of interest shifted from one European master to another. France was the loser in the process, with Great Britain and Spain coming out on top. Roughly speaking, all territory to the west of the Mississippi River became Madrid's trust, whereas the Floridas, Canada, and the area to the east of old-man-river moved into the British orbit.

Slow as overseas' communications were in those days it took a long time before the provisions of the peace treaty could be carried out. Florida was among the first of the ceded territories to see the British colors flying. Pensacola in West Florida changed hands on August 8, 1783, five months after peace had been declared, as was reported in a letter of September 5, 1763, by the commander of a British force which landed there (see Chapter Q on colonial Florida). Much more time was needed to carry out the transition of power in the territories west of the Alleghennies. Some fortifications on the

Mississippi in Illinois Country were still in French hands in the early fall of 1765.

As soon as the Union Jack was hoisted over Fort Chartres and Fort Sackville, the main strongholds in the latter area, British merchants arrived and established trading posts in the villages along the river, the fertile alluvial plain that received the name of the "American Bottom" (figure V-1). Peltries formed the main basis for their commercial activities, but all kind of merchandise began to change hands in Kaskaskia and Cahokia. A great variety of essentials were needed for the sustenance of life in a primitive society and had to be supplied under the most trying circumstances. In the beginning the local military government, upon orders from the Crown, encouraged shipment through private channels of such articles which were destined to pacify the hostile Indian tribes.

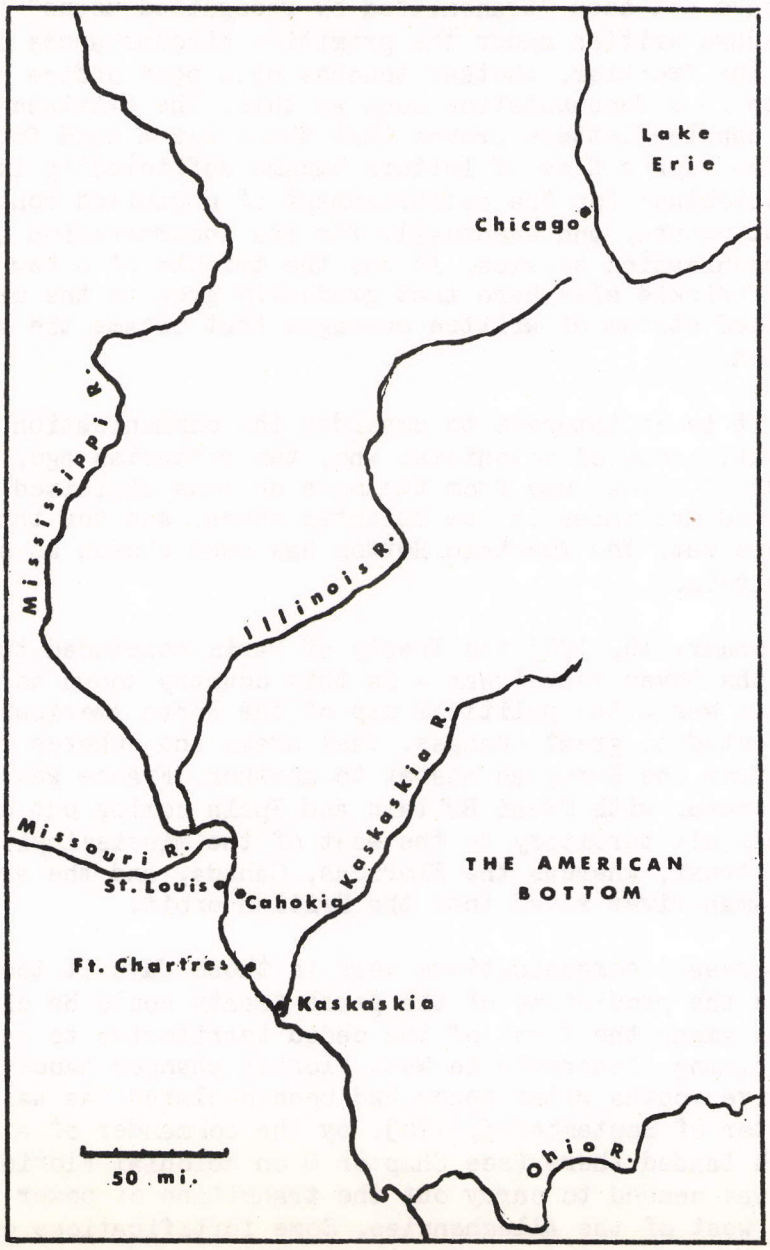


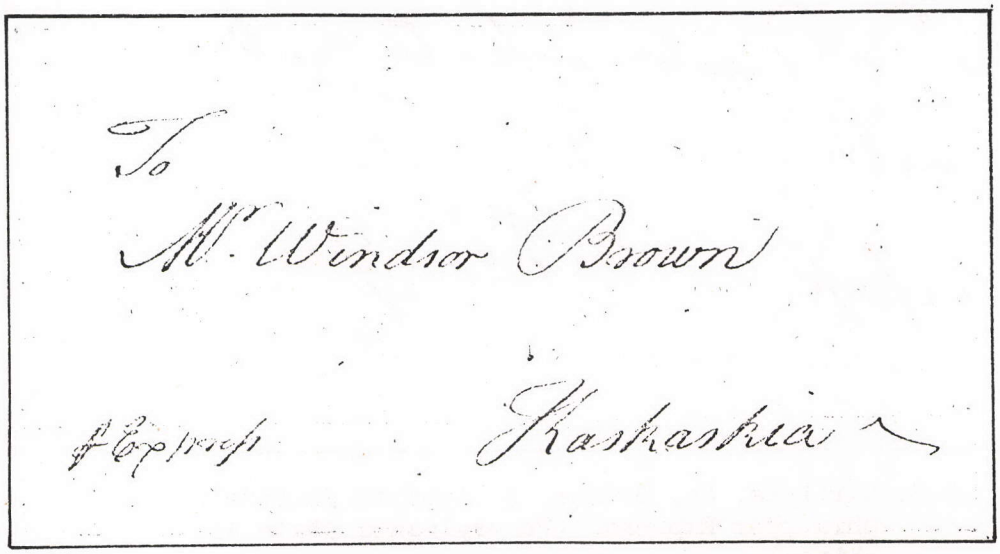
Figure V-1

With trade came the necessity of keeping contact with the outside world. Letters had to be written, products and commodities had to be moved and consequently roads had to be cut through the wilderness. Then means of transportation had to be organized. The waterways of the Mississippi river basin formed a natural communication network. However, the most important commercial centers were located on the Atlantic coast, which could only be reached by land routes. Fort Pitt, formerly Fort Duquesne, and now called Pittsburgh, became a busy transportation hub.

In the Illinois Guide, published in 1939 by A.C.McLure & Co. of Chicago, the following statement is made on page 57:

> "The outstanding trading venture was undertaken by the Philadelphia firm of Baynton, Wharton and Morgan Company. In one year this firm had $150,000 invested in Illinois. It maintained a forde of carpenteres at Pittsburgh to build boats, and had 300 boatmen on the Ohio River to carry goods to the Illinois country."

It was the writer's good fortune to find the surviving correspondence of this firm, part of which covered the trade with the American Bottom. Many of those old letters reflect a picture of mid-eighteenth century life on the western frontier, its physical hazards, its political intrigues, its scandals, its crimes, its prevailing drive for personal gain. Some of the letters provide the present-day student with a general understanding of the primitive channels and methods of communication, which, though slow and troublesome, aided in making man's existence possible in the American Bottom. Throughout this short period of local colonial history all phases of personal and commercial activities were affected by the continuously shifting influence and power of the British and the Indians, the French and the Spanish.



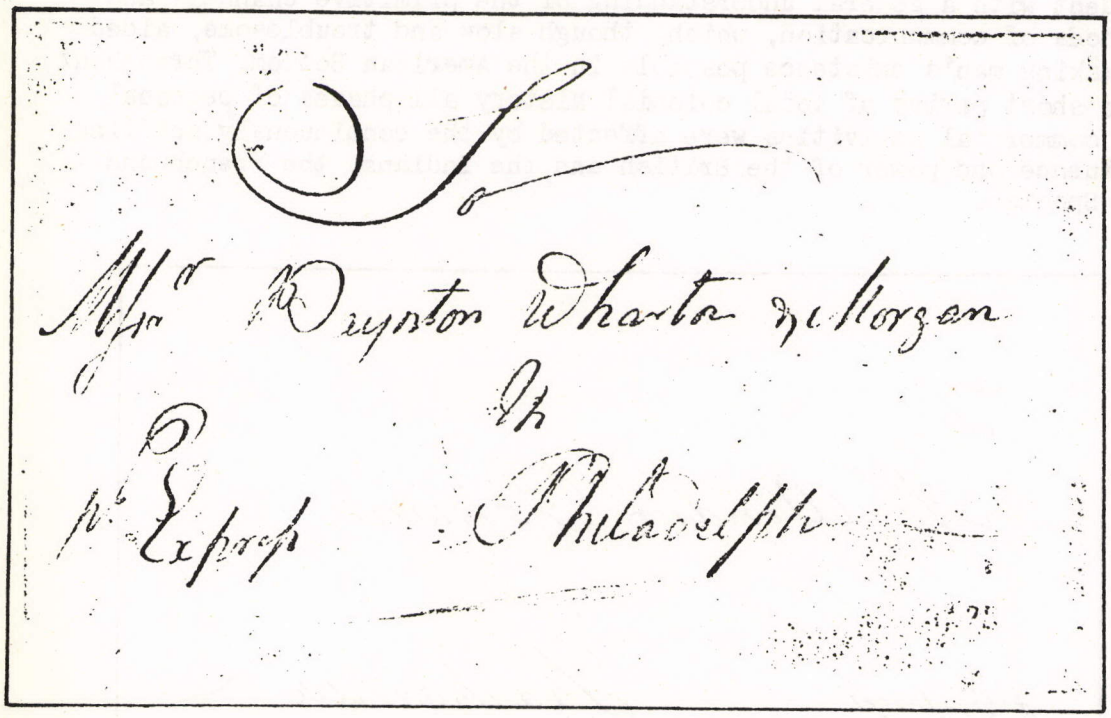
V 2. Fort Chartres, May 26, 1770, to Kaskaskia. Per Express. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

Letters were entrusted to the leaders of convoys which wound their precarious routes from Lancaster and Carlisle along an old Indian trail through Pennsylvania and Maryland to Fort Cumberland and Fort Pitt. From there the packhorses were led through even less navigated and more hazardous territory, until boats carried the traffic on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. In case of an emergency express riders took messages back and forth (figure V-2), but their use was strictly limited limited because of the very high cost of sending a man and his horse through Indian-infested country where no exchange horses were available.

The following letter, written October 3, 1768 by one firm's agent in Carlisle to his principals in Philadelphia underscores the frailties of this method of communication:

> "At four o'clock this afternoon the french man that work with Cope is come back from ye Illinois and has two Packets from Mr. Morgan for you he has left a tired horse with me and I have Given him my Horse fresh and strong and three Dollars to carry him Down he Got but twenty shillings of Mr. Cambell at fort Pitt to bring him to me ..."

The cover of this Express letter is shown in figure V-3:

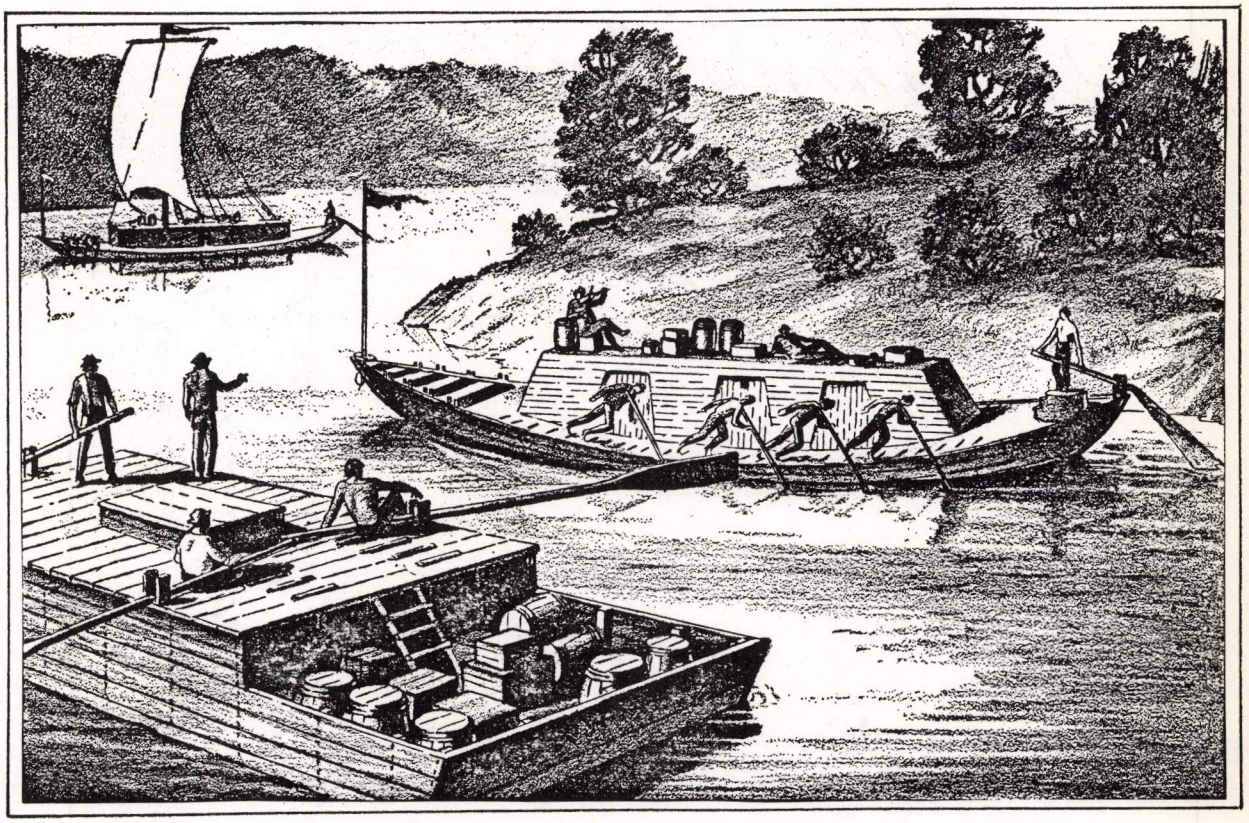


V-3. Carlisle, Pa. October 3, 1768 to Philadelphia. Per Express. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

As a post scriptum Mr. Dobson, the agent, wrote: "I have no money Left now."

In a letter to his partners in Philadelphia George Morgan wrote on October 30, 1768 that one express rider leaving Kaskaskia for their city "promises to deliver his Packet at Fort Pitt in 25 days, accidents excepted." That was two-thirds of the way.

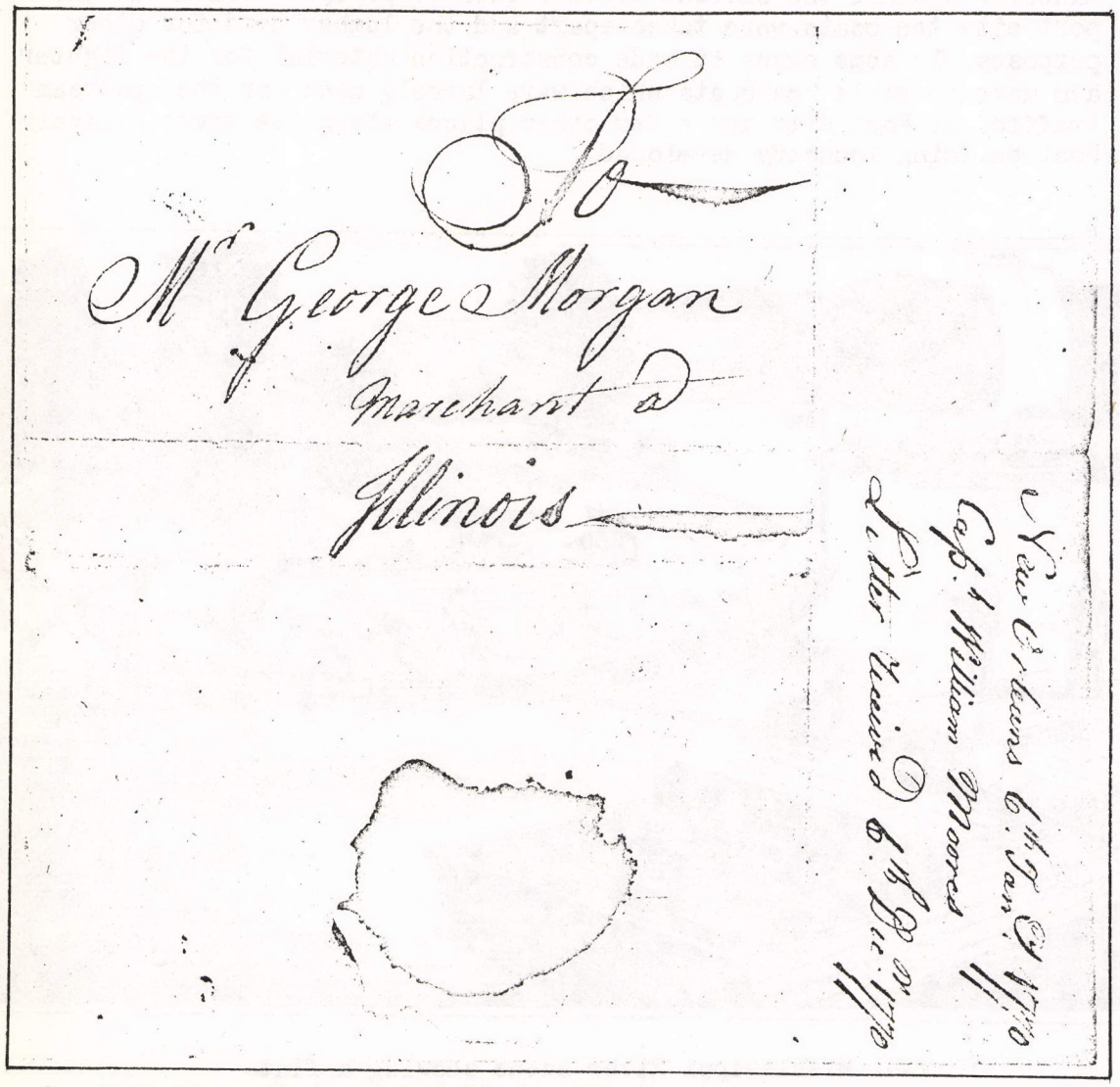
At times letters for Philadelphia went via New Orleans. The physical possibility of sending the mail down and up the river depended greatly on political conditions at both terminals. With the cargo shipping papers were sent that way in flatboats which were the main means of transportation downstreams on the Mississippi River and to its tributaries. These were the so-called "boats that never came back" (figure V-4), as they were the most practical river craft for sending merchandise to New Orleans, but too heavy and too clumsy to maneuver against the current for a return trip. Upon arrival at the port city the boats were taken apart and the lumber used for other purposes. In some cases it made construction material for the lighter and more operable keelboats which were largely used for the upstream traffic. At Fort Pitt and a few other places along the river a lively boat building industry developed.



V-4. Mississippi River scene showing a flatboat and two keelboats (C.H.Ambler).

A letter sent down the river from Kaskaskia to New Orleans took approximately two weeks, but the voyage northward was extremely slow. Though the keelboats usually were towed from the shore, they were propelled part of the way by poling. To this end running boards extended on either side the length of the vessel where the crew supplied the motive power by setting the lond sharp poles on the bottom of the river, pushing against them with their shoulders to the sockets and walking from prow to stern.(v-1)

On January 6, 1770, Captain William Moore, during his stay in New Orleans, wrote a letter to George Morgan, "Marchant à Illinois", the cover of which is shown in figure V-5. Its reverse carries a notation penned by the addressee which reveals that it took exactly eleven months to reach its destination, presumably Kaskaskia in the American Bottom. Morgan represented the Philadelphia firm of Boylston, Wharton & Morgan there.



V-5. New Orleans, January 6, 1770 to Illinois, December 6, 1770. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

(v-1) Charles H. Ambler: History of Transportation in the Ohio Valley. pp. 42-42.

The distance between the two localities measured along the meandering course of the river was approximately one thousand miles. Consequently it meant that the letter carrying vessel had progressed at an average speed of a little over three miles per day. It is certain that the Mississippi's strong current alone could not have been responsible for the letter's late delivery.

The contents of Captain Moore's message provide a possible clue to this anomaly. It read as follows:

"New Orleans 6 January 1770

Sir /

at my arrival hear (sic) I find the Trade with the Inglish is entirely stop'd and they turn'd out the Place but I expect'd to be in the River in the latter End of May or the beginning of June Next insueing / Therefore if you have any skins you may send them Down

am Sir your most obedient Humble Sert.

William Moore"

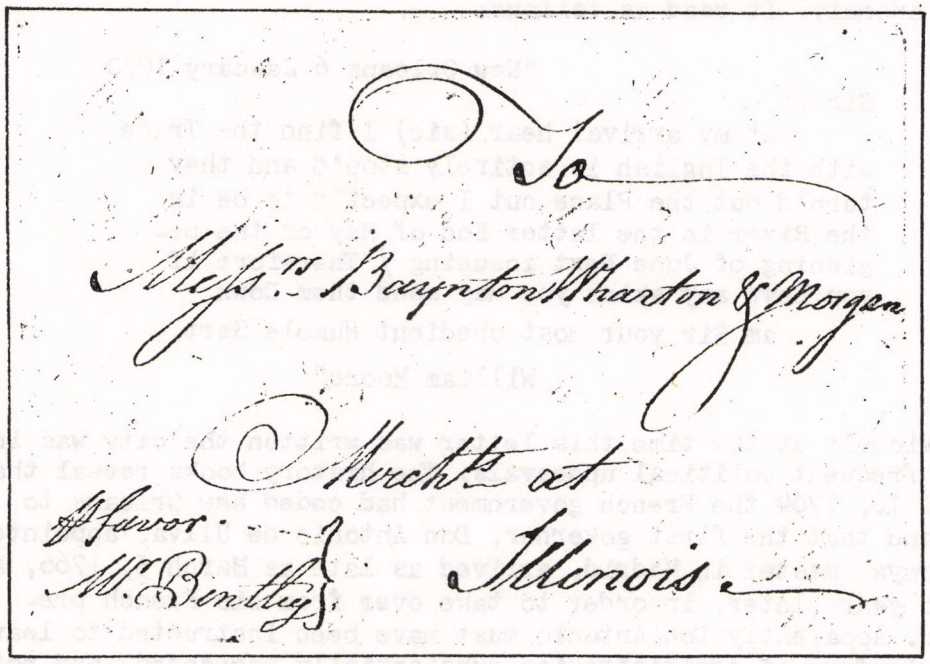
Obviously at the time this letter was written the city was in one its frequent political upheavals. The history books reveal that on April 16, 1764 the French government had ceded New Orleans to Spain, and that the first governor, Don Antonio de Ullva, appointed by his royal master in Madrid, arrived as late as March 5, 1766, almost two years later, in order to take over from his French predecessor. Apparently Don Antonio must have been instructed to leave the city's form of administration substantially unchanged, and not to interfere with its existing social and commercial structures. His presence remained almost unnoticed.

After five years of such cooperative and friendly inactivity by the Spanish authorities the arrival in July, 1769 of Don Alejandro O'Reilly had the effect of an explosion. He entered the city with a substantial number of well-armed troops and a naval force which sailed up the river. His presence in New Orleans resulted in a complete and radical reversal of the quiet and peaceful situation. A dictator had taken a seat next to the governor's. One of the Capitan General's first measures was to chase the British out of the city. During the last few decades all commercial activities had been in their hands. Now the blood of an antagonistic Irishman spoke up.

Captain Moore in his letter referred to this extremely provocative act. A government which banned the British from New Orleans most certainly would have no reason to feel favorably inclined towards supporting a system of communications with their compatriots in the American Bottom. Don Alejandro's heavy hand could very well have caused the extraordinary slow delivery of the captain's letter.

However, for a proper understanding of the situation it is necessary to realize that the actions of a despotic Spanish general were not exclusively responsible for the irregular movement of the boats. When spring thaws sent torrents of water flowing southward

shipments upstream became almost impossible. Rarely was a letter sent by the overland route. Expresses were extremely expensive. Consequently this form of communication had to rely upon the courtesy of occasional travelers for destinations in the north. Such a letter was found in the Harrisburg archives. It was written in Pensacola on November 13, 1770 and addressed to Illinois (figure V-6).



V-6. Pensacola, November 13, 1770, to Illinois. P. favor of Mr. Bentley. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

Prior to the described inimical events in the south British traders in the Illinois country had experienced similar difficulties with the Indian tribes who endangered communications with Philadelphia on the Ohio River and along the one thousand miles of winding trails eastward. Boats were attacked and overland convoys were ambushed, resulting in loss of men, animals, goods and mail.

George Morgan's letters to his partners in Philadelphia contain abundant proof of the unfavorable situation. From Kaskaskia he wrote on February 10, 1769:

> "I shall send three copy's of this short letter via New Orleans, to be forwarded from thence by as many different opportunities ..."

The next day he stated:

> "I have determined on sending Jameson on a French boat with this letter via New Orleans as I find it will be impossible for me to send across the

> country for a considerable time, under a very great expense."

Then again on March 26, 1769:

> "... this will be sent to you via New Orleans, precarious as it may be ... As the uncertainty of your receiving it is great ..."

And on April 26, 1769:

> "Colonel Cole departs tomorow for New Orleans on his way home to Rhode Island."

At that time Don Alejandro had not yet taken the reins of government in New Orleans. All those letters mentioned here reached their destination safely. No one can tell how many were lost during their precarious and roundabout voyage to Philadelphia.

One letter, discovered in the Harrisburg archives, stands out as a perfect sample of eighteenth century correspondence between the American Bottom and Pennsylvania's mercantile capital. It is depicted on the next page as figure V-7. Its date is February 5, 1774. The writer was a French merchant in Kaskaskia, who entertained business relations with the Baynton, Wharton & Morgan firm, though the contents of this particular letter were of a social nature. Unfortunately no mention is made in it of Monsieur Janin's plans regarding the means of conveyance he had in mind for his message. However, there can be no doubt about it having shown up in the hands of John Stephenson, a merchant in Pensacola, Florida, on or shortly prior to December the 10th, 1774, ten months after it had been written. The Pensacola postmark and Stephenson's endorsement on the back of the cover are self explanatory. According to Horrowicz and Lowe (v-2) a Mr. Blackwell was the local postmaster at that time.

One can only guess what happened to this letter between Kaskaskia, where it was written, and Pensacola, though there can be little doubt that it came down the Mississippi together with one of the peltry shipments to New Orleans. Practically nothing is known about the operation of a post office in the crescent city during the Spanish occupation, but someone - probably an agent of the Philadelphia business firm - must have seen to it that this letter was sent eastward.

The British administration of West Florida from the very beginning showed an active interest in establishing communication facilities between Pensacola and Mobile. It even considered digging a canal to the Mississippi River thereby bypassing the Spanish stronghold of New Orleans. In a California Press publication (v-3) on West Florida mention is made of the Provincial Council's resolution to open a road connecting the two towns. It was embodied in an Act

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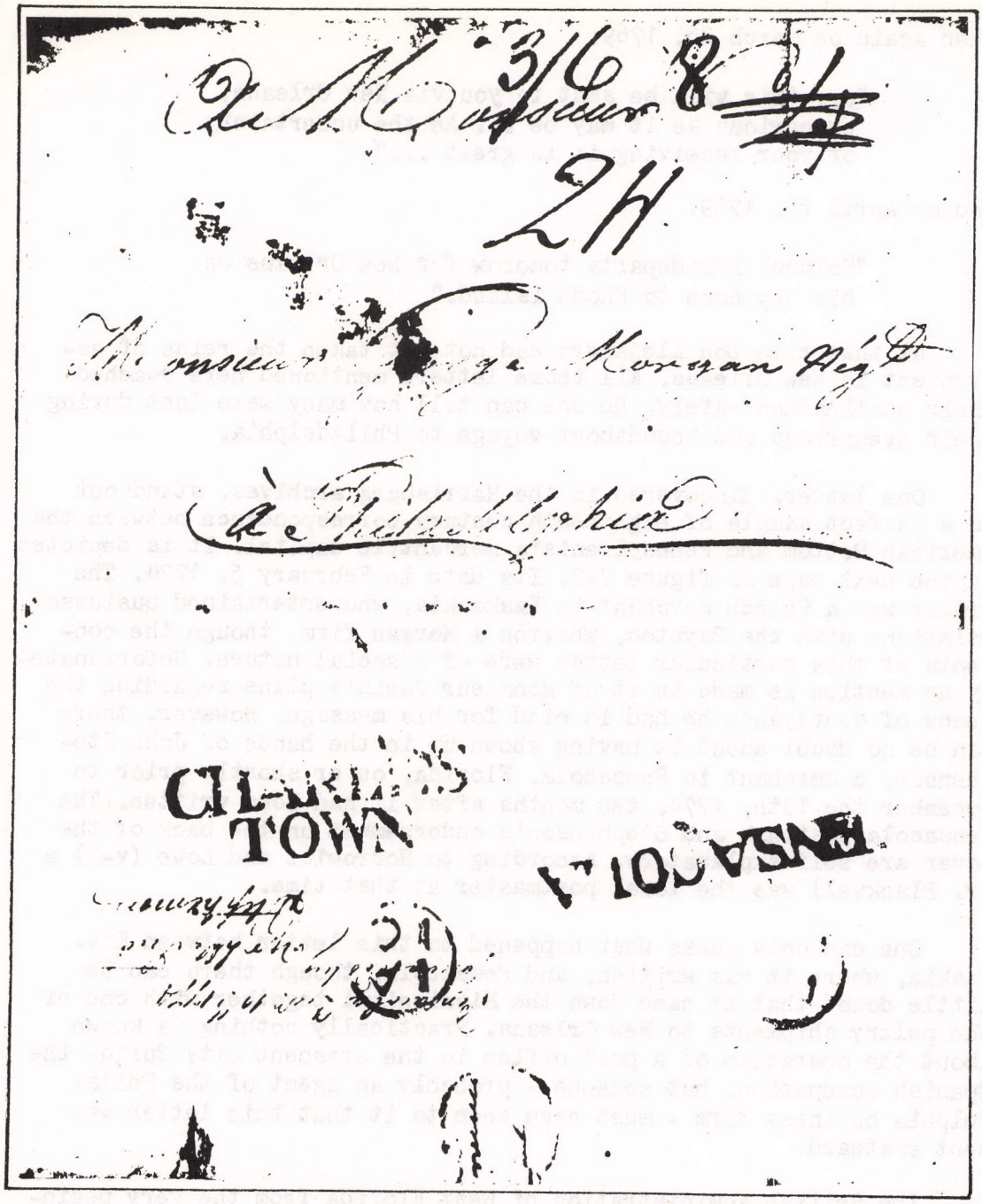
(v-2) Kay Horrowicz and Robson Lowe: The Colonial Posts in the United States of America, 1606-1783 (London, 1967) p. 18.

(v-3) Clinton N. Howard: The British Development of West Florida, 1763-1769. (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1947). pp. 36-37.



V-7. Kaskaskia, Illinois, February 5, 1774, to Philadelphia, via PENSACOLA, black, 56 x 6, December 10, and CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, Bishop mark IA(NUARY) /10, 1775, all on reverse. Rate 2 sh., local currency 3 sh. 6 d.
(Pennsylvania State Archives).

of the Assembly of June 5, 1767. The road was definitely in use by 1770.

Letters from New Orleans which arrived in Philadelphia contain references to the then existing road connection between the two towns. The Philadelphia firm's agent in New Orleans, on July 31, 1764 requested that a ship be directed to Mobile and added:

> "... be so good to order ye Capt to touch at Pensacola but not to break the Cargo, until he has dispatched a letter to me with his invoices, which he can always do by land."

This proves that a Pensacola-Mobile road existed as early as 1764, though it may have been no better than an Indian trail. It also indicates that letters passed between Pensacola and New Orleans.

Another letter, written in New Orleans on February 18, 1768 addressed to Philadelphia stated:

> "I have taken my passage to Mobile purpose going over land from Mobile to Pensacola."

Apparently there was no road connecting New Orleans and Mobile at the time, but people traveled by boat.

It is most likely therefore that in 1774 the Kaskaskia letter to Philadelphia went by sea to Mobile and from there to Pensacola by land. No effort will be made to seek conformation of the letter's route to Florida by interpreting the postal charges penned on the cover's back. It would be a speculative undertaking.

However, the town markings handstamped in Pensacola and in Charlestown clearly certify the letter's further course. The Packet boat DILIGENCE, with captain Arthur Clarke in command, arrived in Pensacola from Jamaica on December 10, 1774, and left with the mail for Charlestown on December 22, where she dropped anchor on January 9, 1775 (v-4). A Bishop mark, dated January 10, proves that the postmaster in Charlestown had taken the responsibility for the letter's forwarding to Phialdelphia. He rated it 2 shillings. His colleague in Pennsylvania penned its local equivalent of 3 shillings, 6 pence on the cover.

Two centuries ago the British administration did not operate a post office in the American Bottom, not in Kaskaskia nor in Cahokia, and it excersised no jurisdiction in New Orleans. Yet there was a continuous, though erratic flow of correspondence between the two areas by private means. In 1774 a Kaskaskia letter could reach Philadelphia via this primitive, extra-postal route, though it took ten months or longer to arrive.

(v-4) See Chapter on the Transatlantic Mail.

The objective of science is to direct man away from sin and to guide his spirit towards perfection.

Copernicus.

W. Epilogue

Alex.L.ter Braake

When a book on postal history is published which is illustrated by a few hundred letter-covers, some carrying postal markings which were never reported before, the question may be raised whether there is sufficient proof that these rarities are genuine. The mere existence of such postmarked covers should not satisfy a serious student of their authenticity. In view of the high prices which are being charged and paid for unusual postal history material such a question is justified. It is for that reason that a few words should be said about the legitimacy of the covers and their markings which are on display in this volume. The writer has given serious consideration to this matter. He is convinced that no material has been used that is of doubtful nature, though no guarantee of genuiness can be presented.

An interesting example is given here how doubts will spring up sometimes. This author discovered a 1768 business letter addressed to Newport, R.I. in the archives of the Newport Historical Society. It carried the hitherto unknown town marking of Wilmington, N.C. It is illustrated in Part II as illustration NC 6. One well-known American expert flatly called it a forgery, whereas an equally knowledgeable postal historian in England was convinced of its authenticity.

Kindled by these controversial opinions the individual history of this letter and its cover was investigated. The results were as follows.

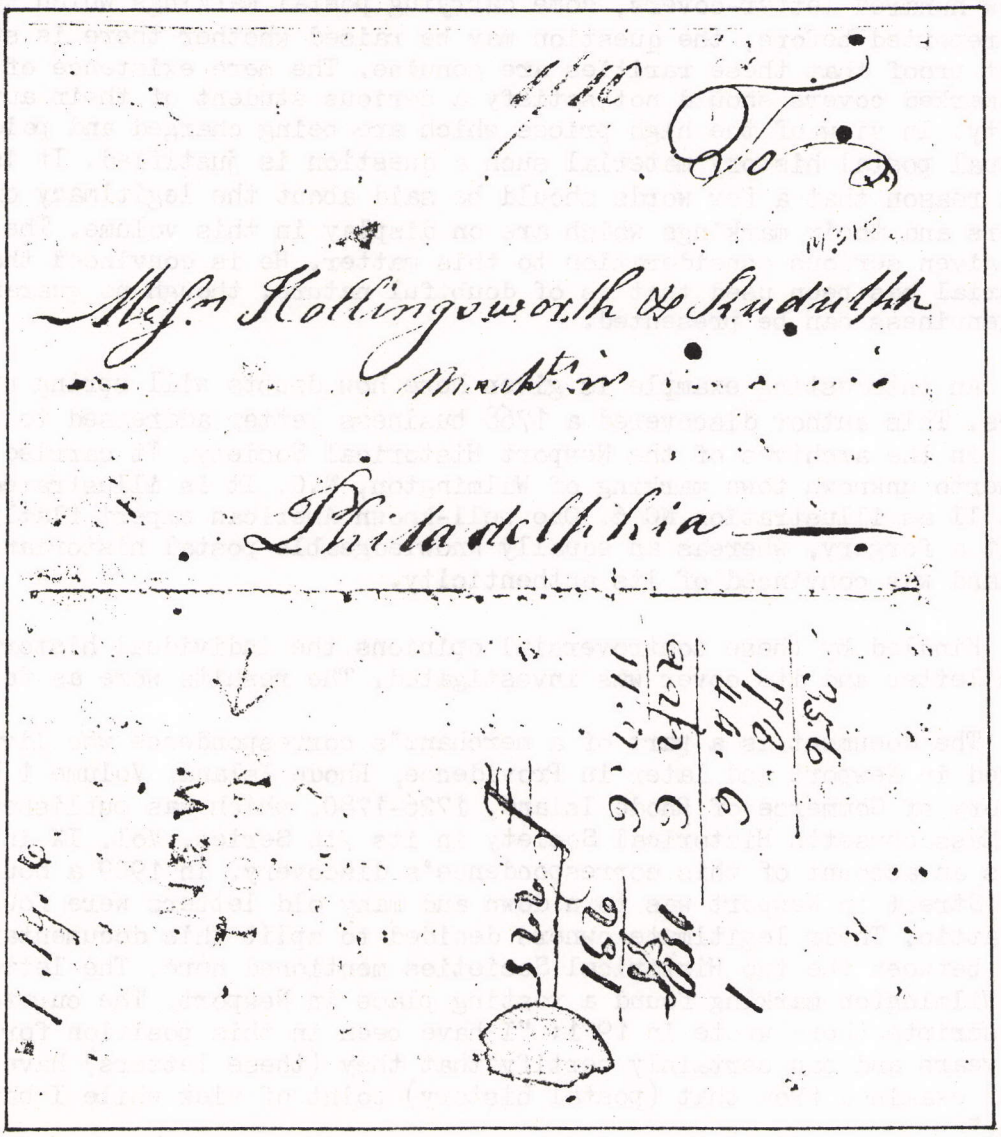
The document is a part of a merchant's correspondence who lived and worked in Newport and later in Providence, Rhode Island. Volume 1 of a history of Commerce of Rhode Island, 1726-1780, which was published by the Massachusetts Historical Society in its 7th Series, Vol. IX in 1909, gives an account of this correspondence's discovery. In 1909 a house on Mary Street in Newport was torn down and many old letters were found in the attic. Their legitimate owners decided to split this documentary find between the two Historical Societies mentioned here. The letter with the Wilmington marking found a resting place in Newport. The curator of manuscripts there wrote in 1971: "I have been in this position for twenty six years and can certainly certify that they (these letters) have never been examined from that (postal history) point of view while I have been here."

As far as this writer is concerned the information presented here is sufficiently convincing. It is an authentic Wilmington Marking.

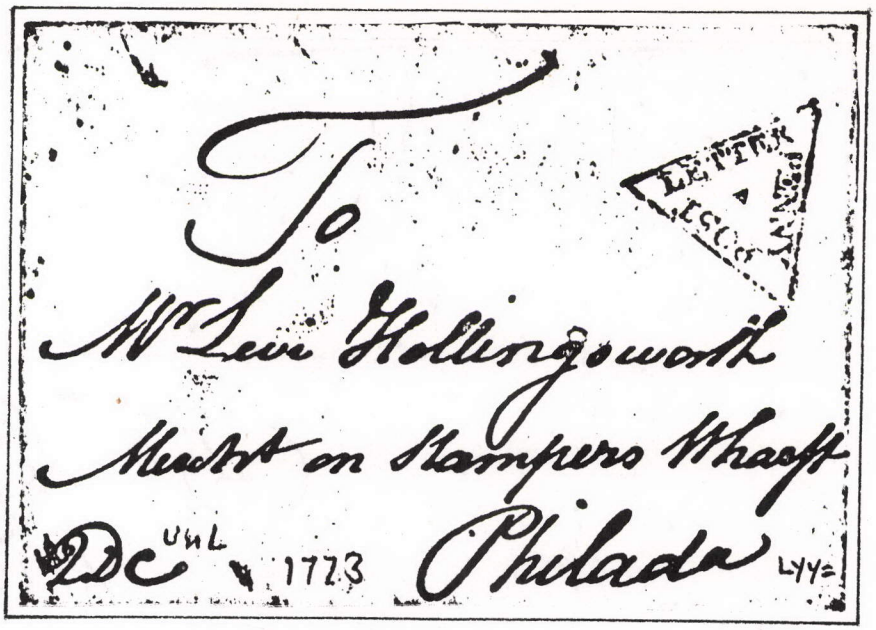
However, shortly after the manuscript for this book was completed

a few covers with interesting postal markings were submitted to this author for examination and eventual use in this book by a serious and knowledgeable collector of postal history material which are likely to belong in the category of falsifications. Naturally before making such a public statement one must be convinced by its soundness, and also one should be able to present sufficient evidence for the support of this opinion. In view of the very unpleasant consequences to the owners of postal history material of this kind, who see the market value of their "rare" covers reduced to practically nothing, the writer of this Epilogue fully realizes his obligation to state all the facts which led him to this conclusion.

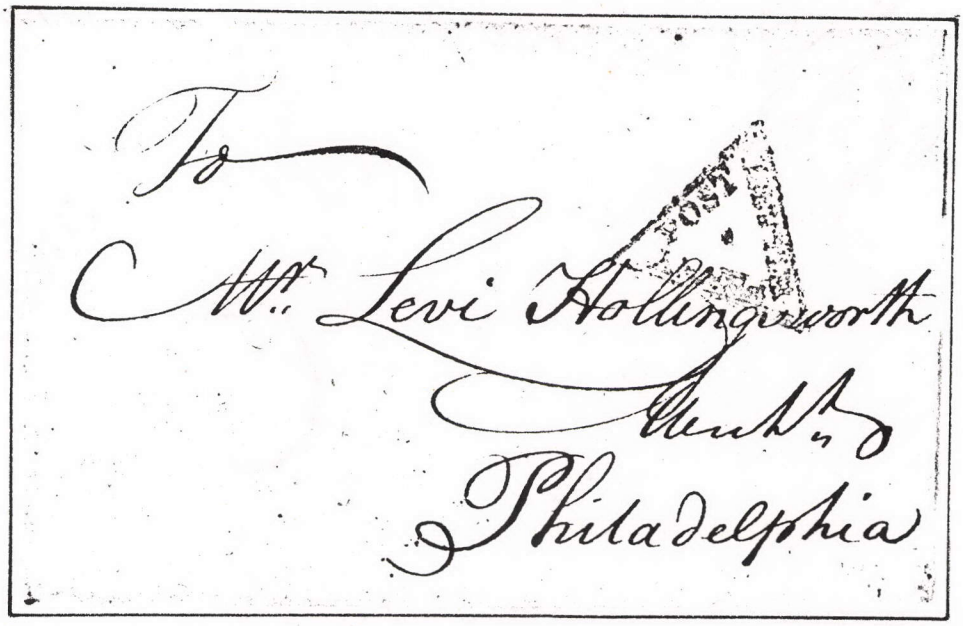
Before arguing his case the incriminating material is put on display here.



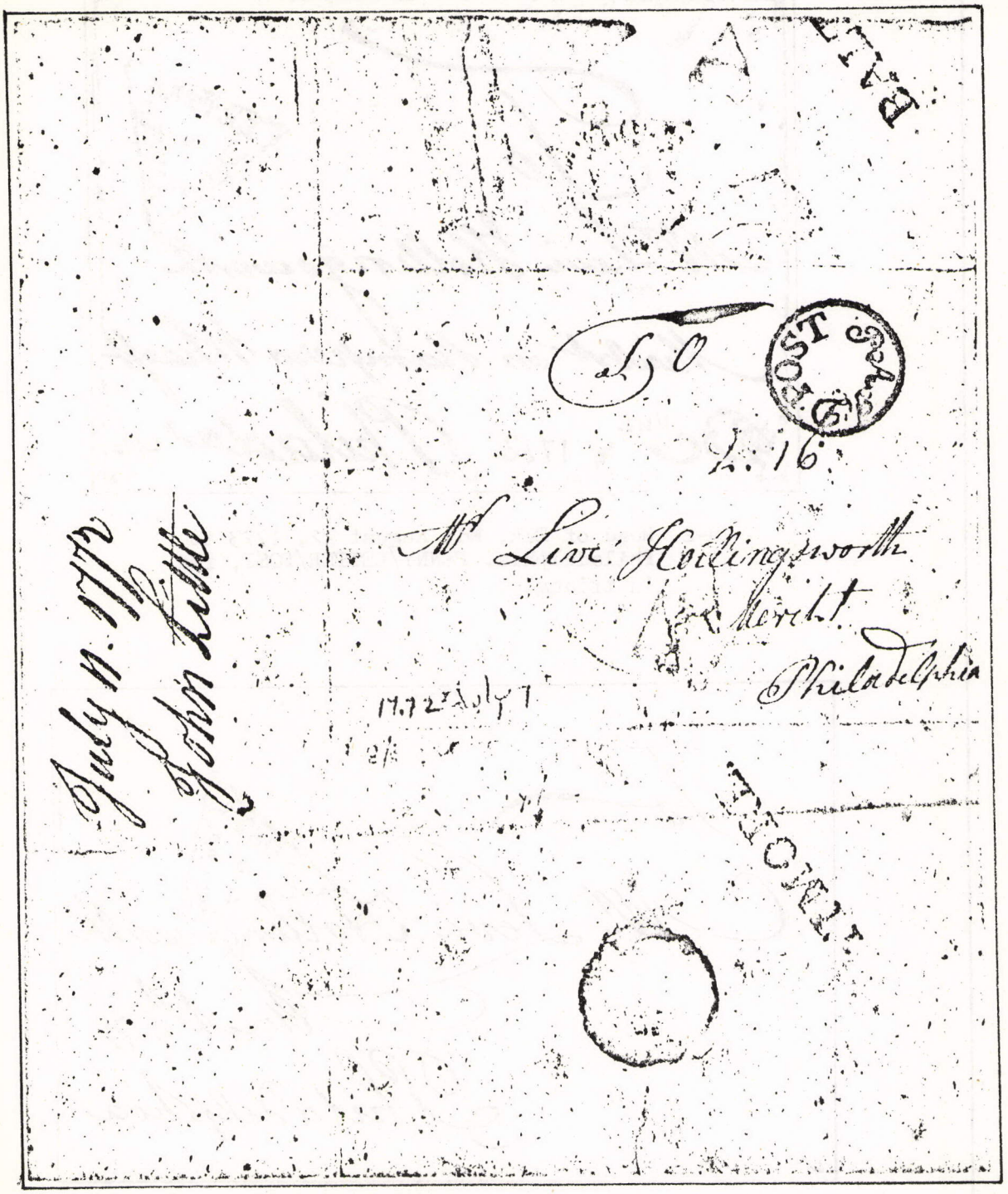
W-1. NEW/TOWN, brown-black, 28 x 12½, on reverse. September 4, 1770, to Philadelphia. Rated 4 dwts. in red (faint), local currency 1/10.



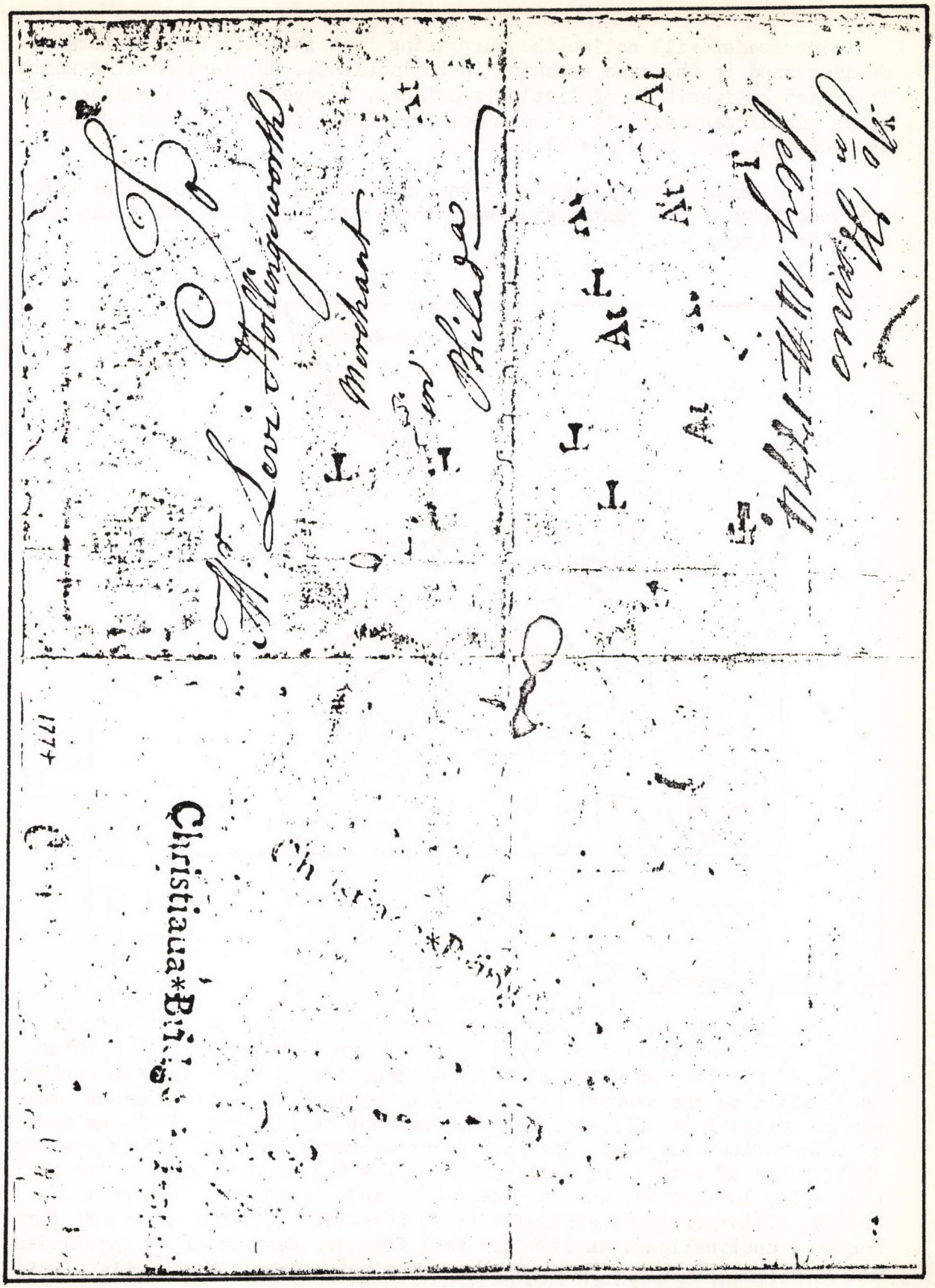
W-2. Head of Elk, Md. August 22, 1773 to Philadelphia. PENNY/LETTER/POST, red in triangle.



W-3. Head of Elk, Md. 1773 to Philadelphia. Triangular PENNY/LETTER/POST in red.



W-4. BALTIMORE, black, 53 x 5, onreverse, July 11, 1772, to Philadelphia. Rated 2 dwts, 16 grs. POST PAID in circle, black.



W-5. Christiaua*Bridge, red, 53 x 6, February 14, 1774 to Philadelphia.

The reader will notice the surprising fact that all five letters were addressed to the same merchant in Philadelphia, Mr. Levi Hollingsworth. This fact by itself is of little importance. However, the coincidence becomes significant when it is considered in combination with the appearance of four very rare postal markings.

For a proper understanding of the analyses which are following here the geography of the postal area were these mailings were made a map is shown in figure W-6.

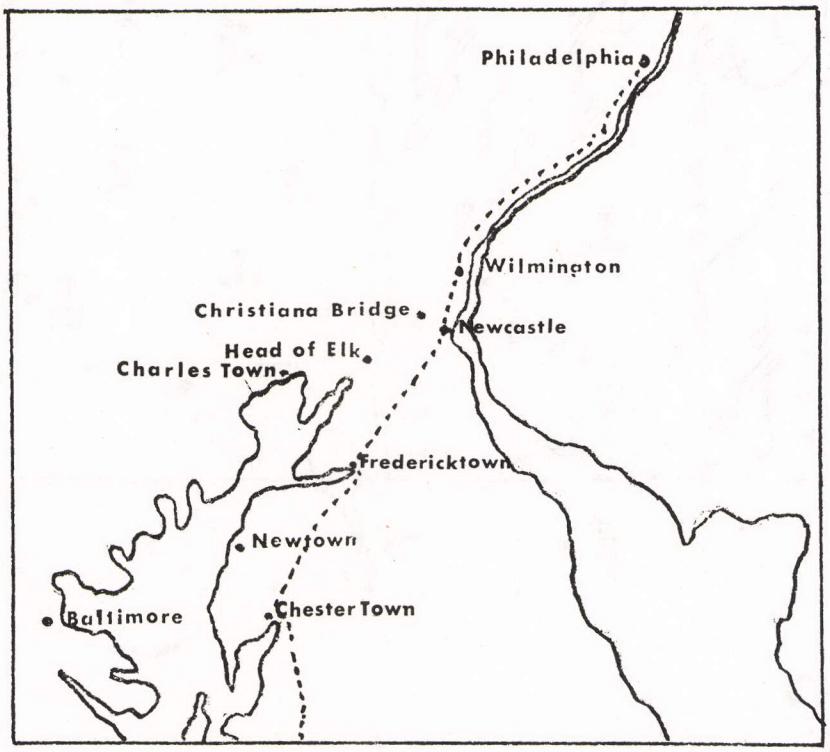


Figure W-6

NEW TOWN, Maryland.

The name of this post office appears on the "List of Post Offices in the Northern District of North America" (w-1). However, when Governor Sharpe of Maryland on October 20, 1764 presented "A Route from Annapolis in Maryland to the several Parts of that Province where it might be proper to settle Post Offices", New Town was not on it. After 1774 the name of this office disappears from the colonial postal records. It is obvious that it was of little importance, except for the purpose of handling mail from a few localities, such as Queen Anne and Chestertown (See Part II, MD 23), if letters were scheduled to be forwarded by river transport for northern destinations. In 1774 the mail from the Eastern Shore localities went overland: Talbot - Chester Town - Frederick Town - New Castle - Phi-

(w-1) Philip H. Ward, Jr.: The American Philatelist, September, 1952, p. 903.

ladelphia. New Town's postal role had come to an end.

Yet, the NEW/TOWN marking on the 1770 letter of figure W-1 would indicate that this unimportant post office was using a handstamp even 19 months earlier than the Baltimore office did (See Part II, MD 6). This marking was in black ink and measured 27½ x 12 mm. The letter itself, addressed to Philadelphia, was dated September 4, 1770, according to a one-time owner of this piece of mail. In the course of 1973 it was put on auction and the cover was described in the catalogue as: "A very important colonial rarity", and the "earliest of the two known in red & only two known in black." Its estimated value at that occasion was between $350-500. The American Stampless Cover Catalog on page 58 (latest edition) emphasized the wide gap between the letters T and O in TOWN.

Apparently it was never noticed that the town's markings reported were of two different kinds. A second type measured 28 x 15 mm. and does not show the gap just mentioned. This marking is illustrated in Part II, figure MD 23. The letter was dated March 19, 1773 and was addressed to Philadelphia, but not to Levi Hollingsworth.

Triangular PENNY POST LETTER.

This handstamped marking in red ink, illustrated by figures W-2 and -3, was found on two letters which originated in Head of Elk (now Elkton), located in north-eastern Maryland. Both were addressed to Levi Hollingsworth in Philadelphia.

The nature of the Penny Letter Post has been described in the Chapter on "Postage Rates", page D-47. It was a service which was reactivated from its earlier use by Benjamin Franklin in Philadelphia, while he was deputy postmaster there. The local newspaper of July 26, 1753 announced that delivery of unclaimed letters to the addressees would be made, at an extra postage of one penny, a service which had been introduced in the City of London one century earlier. A triangular hand stamp came into use at that time, designed by William Dockwra.

Apparently some person decided to place a somewhat similar triangular marking on some Philadelphia pieces of mail in 1773, twenty years after Franklin had started the service. No other covers have ever been reported which carry this imprint. Again Levi Hollinsworth was the addressee of this letter. It should be noted that these two letters do not carry rate markings for the distance Head-of-Elk - Philadelphia, consequently it is doubtful that they were carried by the British postal service. It is more likely that they were sent by a private carrier.

Circular POST PAID.

This remarkable marking which is shown in figure W-4 on a letter from Baltimore to Philadelphia, dated July 11, 1772, was reported for the first time by the Associated Stamp Clubs of the Chesapeake Area in their "Postal Markings of Maryland 1765-1855" (1960, p. 51), and again by Kay Horowicz and Robson Lowe in "The Colonial Posts in the United States of America, 1606-1783", p. 21. In both these instances, however, only the marking was shown, and no details of a cover upon which the circular marking was stamped were recorded. The author of the first-named publication on page 38 stated that the "Post Paid" marking was believed to be very rare, "possibly unique". Now that the entire cover has become available for analysis it is possible to scrutinize the nature of this facinating marking more keenly.

Since the letter's date is clearly written on the back of the cover the time of its having been handled by the post office in Baltimore can be established. The town marking BALTIMORE in black ink on the reverse precludes any doubt where the postage of 2 dwts. 18 grs. was prepaid.

Prepayment of postage dates back to the early years of the 18th century, particularly on transatlantic mail. But the use of Post Paid handstamps in whatever form on domestic correspondence started much later. Philadelphia had its first PAID handstamp in 1782.

The first thing that hits the eye when examining this cover is the very pronounced difference in clearness of the two markings: BALTIMORE and POST PAID. The first one is similar to the postal imprints that appear on letters handled by other post offices during the same period. However, the circular marking is exceptionally sharp. The two apparently have not been placed on this piece of mail at the same time. Since the first Baltimore hand-stamped townmark, found so far, was dated March 16, 1772 the appearance of this modern looking POST PAID imprint on a letter of July 11, 1772 looks very much out-of-place.

CHRISTIAUA*BRIDGE .

On February 14, 1774 John Harris in Paxton (location unknown so far) wrote a letter to Levi Hollingsworth in Philadelphia, the cover of which is depicted in figure W-5. No postage rate is in evidence, consequently it is doubtful whether the letter ever passed the hands of a postmaster. The cover carries the above town mark in red ink on its back. The markings measurements are 53 x 6 mm. The letter "n" in Christiana is printed upside-down. This fact and the presence of a second poor imprint and of numerous "T" and "At" impressions makes one believe that this cover was used for experimentation, for trying out a printing device or devices. Why this person selected the name of Christiana Bridge (today's Chistiana) which was located on Christiana Creek, for his experiments can only be guessed, but it is a fact that Christiana Bridge was only a stage on the Baltimore-Philadelphia postal route, but not a post office (See Chapter O on Maryland Colonial Post, Pp. 23-4).An attempt to pass this cover on as a genuine Christiana, Delaware postal history item of 1774 obviously would be very suspicious.

At this point it becomes necessary to say a few words about the addressee of the five letters described above. Levi Hollingsworth (1739-1824) was a member of a distinguished merchant family in Philadelphia, though his father lived in Elkton (Head of Elk). In 1770 Levi did business under the name of Hollingsworth and Rudulph. One of the Archives in Philadelphia is the custodian of the Hollingsworth collection of papers. It holds several thousands of items, dated between 1748 and 1887.

The author examined the approximately one thousand letters in this collection of the 1770-1776 years, which were all addressed to Levi Hollingsworth or to his firm in Philadelphia. With three or four exceptions this correspondence originated exclusively from locations in the northern part of Maryland, and from one place in Delaware, consequently from the area where the letters of figures W-1 through -5 were written and posted. Not one single of these carried the kind of markings which have attracted the attention of postal historians.

In contradistinction to the ownership of this archival letter collection in Philadelphia the five items under discussion are in private hands, four of these are owned by one collector. In an effort to track-back latest history of these documents one of their one-time possessors mentioned to this author that they had been owned by a Philadelphian who "seemed to have access to libraries, court houses, etc., and was able to turn up a lot of material. Some letters (not these five) show evidence of having been bound. The stitches are still present." Unfortunately those who probably could have been helpful in solving this puzzle or original ownership are not among the living.

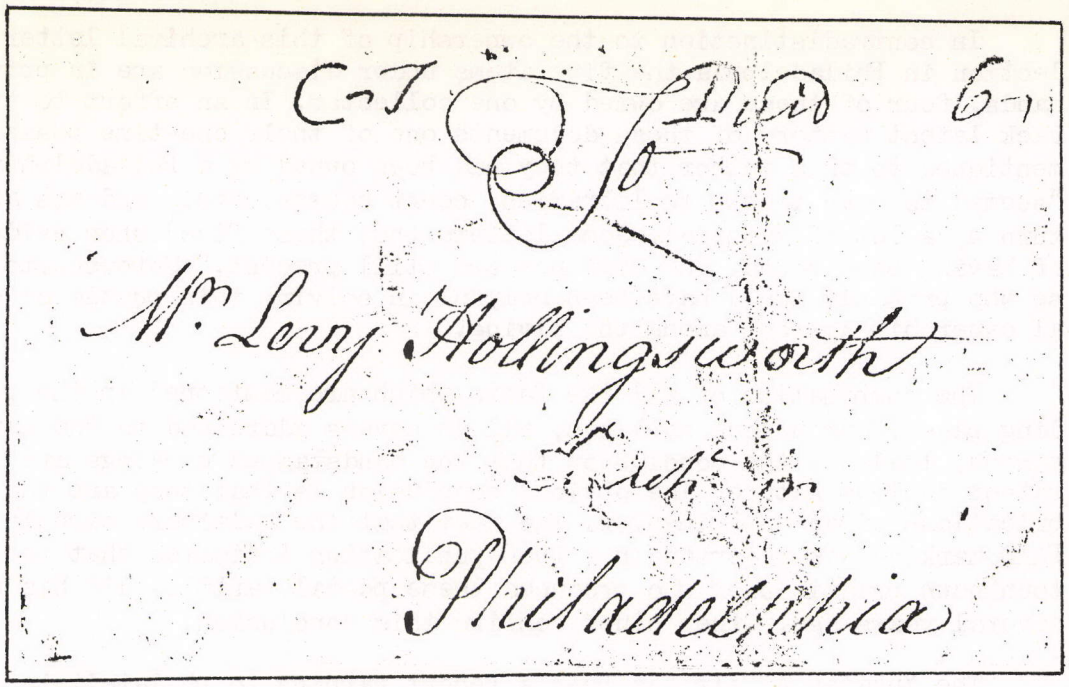
The combination of all the facts which are mentioned in the preceding pages,four unique markings, all on covers addressed to the same person, leads to the conclusion that the handstamped markings are of a rather dubious nature. The obvious conclusion is that they are the fabrications of an experimentor. The fact that the Baltimore circular POST PAID marking was reported in a 1960-publication indicates that the hithertounknown practitioner who produced these postal rarities did his work several years ago. Other clues confirm this conclusion.

The Yukatan Affair has been a recent warning to philatelists and postal historians. Raoul de Thuin made handstamps of all sorts and applied them for the "upgrading" of unimpressive covers. In 1963 a Dutch fraud was sent to jail for producing and selling hundreds of "interesting" markings on letters alleged to have originated in the Netherlands East Indies and elsewhere. He acquired material for his products by pilfering government archives.

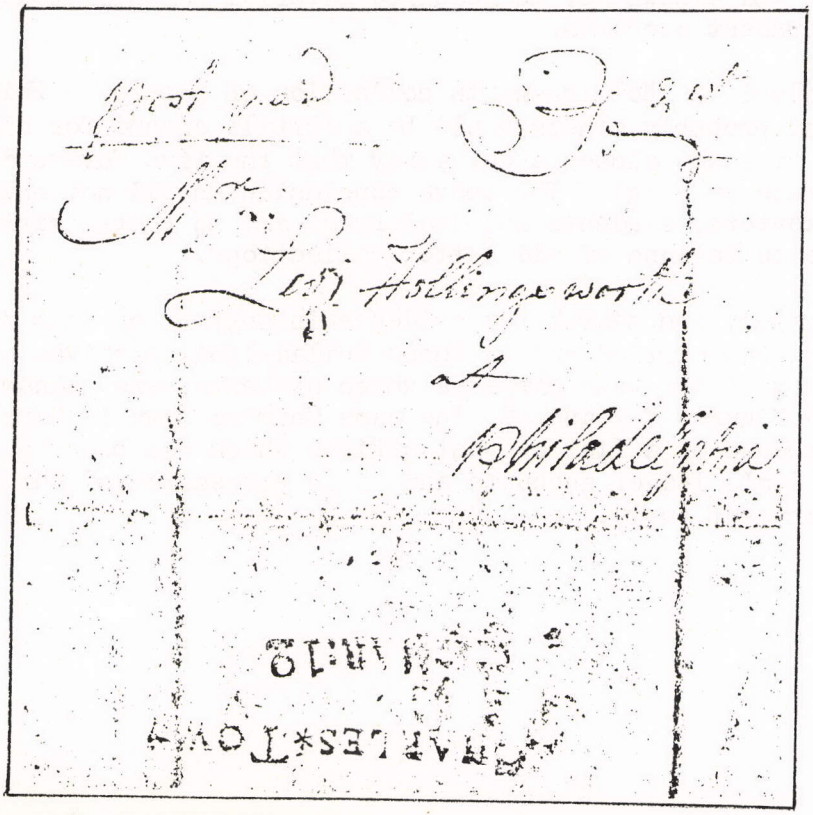
The voluminous Hollingsworth collection of papers in Philadelphia archives and probably others would be a fertile ground for similar activities and it seems almost a certainty that the five covers discussed here are of such an origin. The above conclusion should not only be a warning to collectors, students and dealers of and in postal history material, but also to custodians of old letter collections.

Fortunately the search for evidence in support of this denunciatory theory which was carried out in those Philadelphia archives also led to the discovery of two town markings which hitherto were unknown. They are depicted in figures W-7 and -8. The name Charles Town in Maryland (see the map) appears on a list of post offices which has been found in Benjamin Franklin's ledger accounts and is in possession of thr U.S. Post Office Department (w-2).

(w-2) Robson Lowe: The Encyclopedia of British Empire Postage Stamps, 1639-1952. Volume V. The Empire in North America. (London)., 1973. p. 12.



W-7. C(harles)-T(own), Md. August 28, 1792, to Philadelphia. Paid 6 dwts, triple rate. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania).



W-8. CHARLES*TOWN, black, 49 x 5, MAR(CH):12, on reverse, 1775, to Philadelphia. Post paid 2 wt. (Historical Society of Pennsylvania).

"... It is the duty of every good citizen to use all the opportunities which occur to him, for preserving documents relating to the history of his country."

Thomas Jefferson.

PART II.

American

COLONIAL and PRE-CONSTITUTIONAL TOWN MARKINGS

P R E F A C E

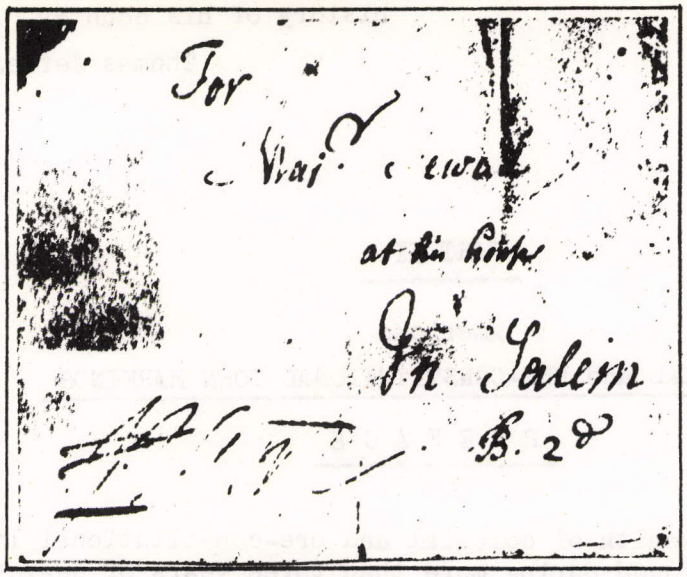
From the wealth of colonial and pre-constitutional letters which have been found during more than three years of searching in several of the nation's archives and other depositories approcimately one thousand rare documents have been selected for copying. Among this copied material are a sizable number of letter covers which were made available by private collectors. In the majority of cases only the folded letter's outsides, the covers, were copied, interesting as they were to the postal history student because of their markings and endorsements. Copies of a letter's contents were made only if these revealed postal details of some importance.

The resulting collection of copies formed valuable study material. It contains samples of letters which were posted in or were addressed to towns in the thirteen founding colonies. Pieces of Canada and Florida mail, written and dispatched during the years when these colonies were served by the same postal administration as their neighbors, have been included.

The earliest covers thus copied date back to the days of Nieuw Nederland (New Netherland) and Nya Sverige (New Sweden). However, none of those carry town markings, manuscript or stamped notations, which give proof of a letter's postal processing. Probably the oldest of these which were in use in colonial America were the "ff" (franco = prepaid) jottings on trans-atlantic mail of the late seventeenth century and the "Post Payd" marking on the cover of the Lovelace letter of 1672.

At the turn of that century the need became apparent to indicate a letter's place of origin by placing markings on the cover. This enabled the postmaster of the receiving town to return a letter without opening it if it could not be delivered to the addressee for whatever reason. The oldest American town mark, reported so far, was penned by postmaster John Campbell of Boston, shortly after he took office, on a letter to Salem, dated January 14, 1703. It consisted of a simple "B", as shown in the picture on the next page. With the town marking

appears the amount of postage which was two pence in this case.



Boston-Salem, January 14, 1703.
Rate 2 pence. (Antiquarian Society, Worcester).

The following pages show more than 190 different town markings on cover, arranged alphabetically and chronologically from Canada to Virginia. They form an almost complete spectrum of the town markings which were in use during the colonial era and the years of the revolutionary war. A considerable number of them, found during the search, have never before been reported.

It would not be surprising if in some cases the authenticity of newly discovered markings would be questioned by discriminating minds. Imprints which have never been seen before form a logical target for criticism. A postal history student should be conscious continuously of the possibility that unscrupulous frauds have produced "rarities". The composer of the material that is presented here has realized this danger. He has weighed the pros and cons in each case where doubt seemed to be justified. Though he can not vouch for the genuineness of each and every town marking on exhibit here, he is reasonably certain that no falsicications have been entered.

The above statement is backed up by the fact that a very substantial majority of the covers used in this display were found in letter collections preserved in the nation's prominent archives. In other words their exposure as a bait to the faker has been extremely limited.

As an illustration of the compiler's policy the NEW/YORK marking of 1711 on a well-known cover that went by the Bristol Packet service to the new world (1) has not been used, since the letter's documented

(1) Postal History Journal, July, 1968. Pp. 15-24.

history is vague. On the other hand the handstamped PENSACOLA postmark on a piece of mail which came down the Mississippi river in 1773 on its way to Philadelphia (-2) has been accepted as genuine without any hesitation. The letter was and still is a part of a collection of business papers which were sequestered by the government of Pennsylvania shortly after having been written. It has rested in the State's Archives ever since.

Seldom can the complete history of a letter's existence be traced from beginning to end. However, when a great rarity is found it becomes desirable to explore ts epistolary life as far as possible in order to prove the authenticity of such a letter and of its markings.

A case in point is listed in the following pages as cover NC 6. The letter was written in the West Indian island of Jamaica, shipped to Savannah, Ga. and carried by the colonial postal system to the addressee, Aaron Lopez, a merchant in Newport, R.I. On ist way northward this piece of mail passed the post office in Wilmington, N.C. where it received a postmark which had never been recorded so far until recently discovered by the present author in the archives of the Newport Historical Society in Newport.

After having been described in the philatelic press one American cover expert expressed serious doubt about the authenticity of this hitherto unknown marking. On the other hand a British postal historian of equal reputation unhesitatimgly accepted the Wilmington townmark as genuine.

Fortunately a few facts have been recorded which substantiate the unadulterated history of this letter. A Prefatory in the "Commerce of Rhode Island, 1726-1800", volume I, published by the Massachusetts Historical Society, dated Boston, September 15, 1914, states:

> "The letters and papers printed in these volumes formed a part of the commercial correspondence of four generations of a Newport mercantile house. The last of the principals was Christopher Grant Champlin, who died in 1840 or 1841, leaving his home on Spring Street, Newport, to Christopher Grant Perry. The house, on his death, passed to Hon. Duncan C.Pell, and, known as the Pell House, remained standing until it was demolished a few years ago, to make way for the buolding of the Young Men's Christian Association.
>
> On tearing down the old house the contractor, Manuel, found in the attic some five boxes of manuscripts, the records of mercantile activity from the early part of the eighteenth century. Manuel claimed ownership of the papers, and his claim appears to have been allowed. Attempts were later made to buy the entire collection by Dr. Horatio R. Storer and Mr. George Champlin Masin, but without success; and the papers, apparently with little selection or judgement, entered upon a process of dispersal. A part of the collection went to the Newport Historical Society; another selection found

> its way to the Rhode Island Historical Society; but the larger part appeared in the auction room and was secured by our colleague, Hon. George Peabody Wetmore. What is in existence constitutes but a small part of the original accumulation, and the loss is regrettable, because so few great collections of commercial correspondence for the colonial period remain."

Those letters which came into the possession of the Newport Historical Society at that time, approximately sixty years ago, including those addressed to Aaron Lopez, have remained there ever since. The present curator of manuscripts reports on July 28, 1971:

> "The letters received by the (Newport) Historical Society here were pasted into binders and are still in the same binders. ... I doubt very much that any one has ever examined them for such material (postal markings) before. I have been in this position for twenty six years and can certainly certify that they have never been examined from that point of view while I have been here."

It would seem that the above historical facts regarding the adventures of this letter to Aaron Lopez are sufficient proof of its genuineness and of the authenticity of the postal markings it carries.

Among the many covers shown hereafter there is one exception where the collector hesitates to vouch for the correctness of his interpretation. The New Hampshire cover listed under NH 3 carries a "P" marking. Does it stand for "Paid" or for "Portsmouth" ?

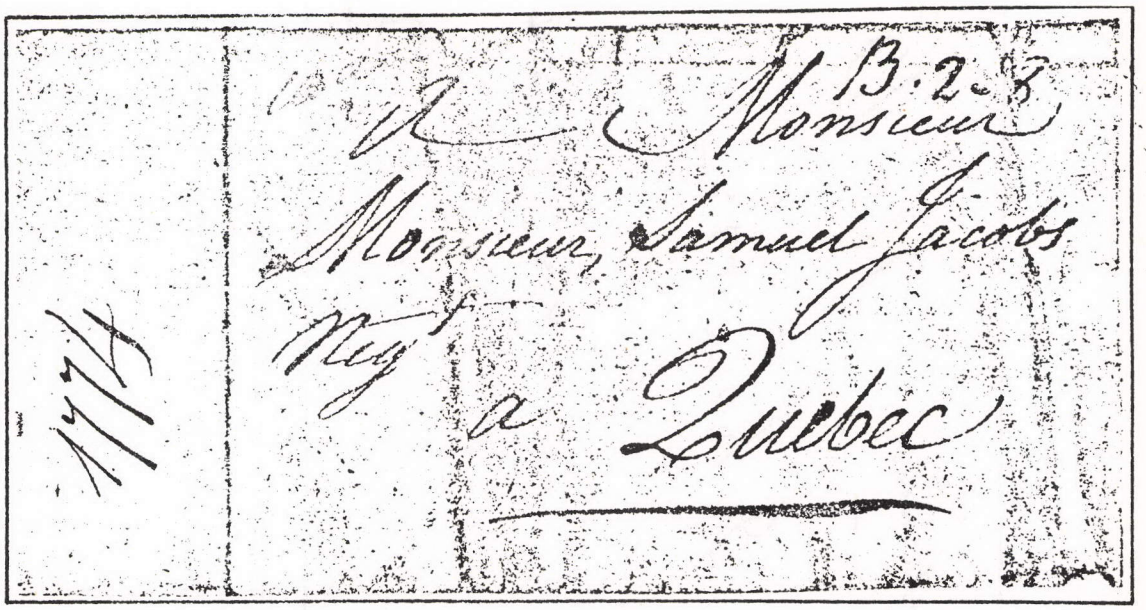
All covers which are depicted in this "picture book" are identified by capital letters and a number which precede their cutlines, thus facilitating references to them. Immediately following the Virginia pages a table of explanatory notes can be found contributing information which, for lack of space, could not be included in the legend of the illustrations.

It is the hope of this compiler that the search for 17th and 18th century postal history material will be continued and that more valuable evidence will be uncovered among the wealth of documents that have been preserved in this and other nation's archives.

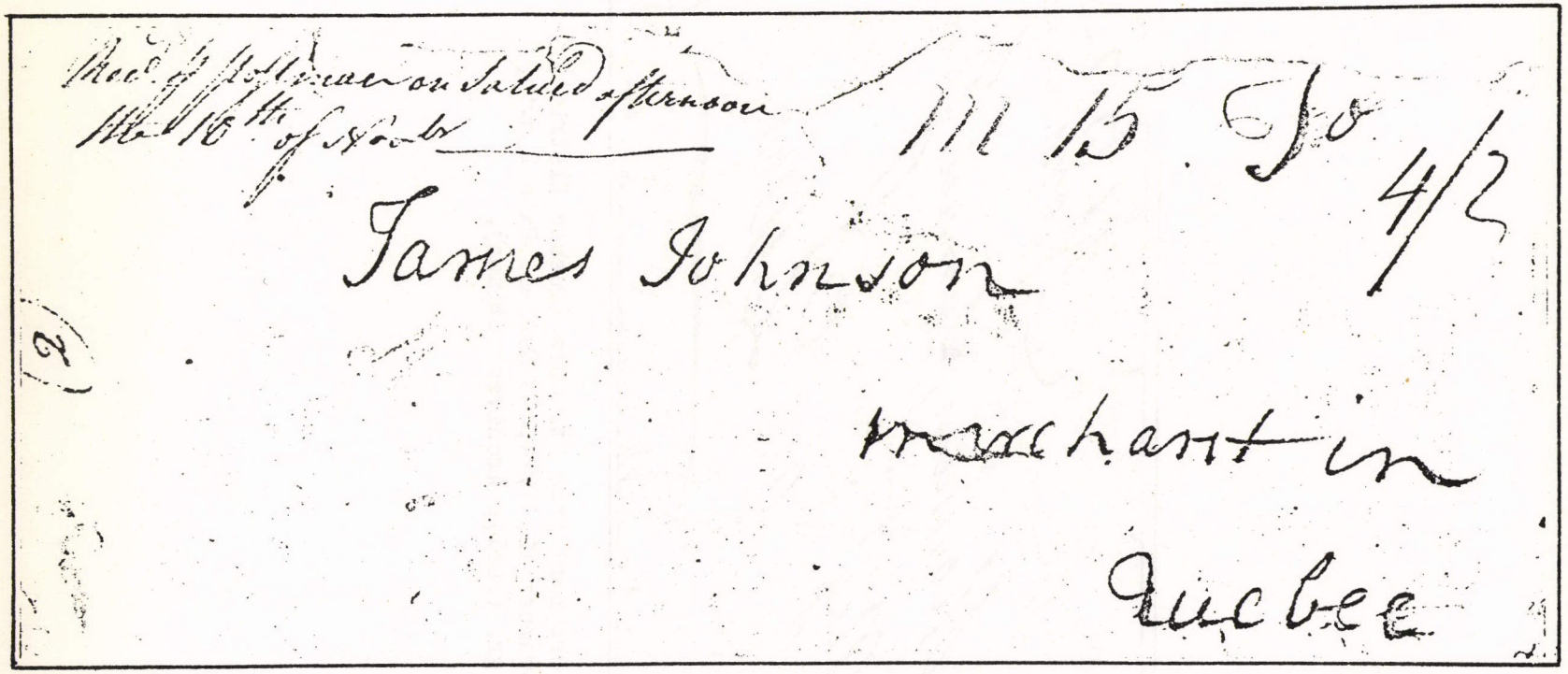
Charleston, West Virginia, 1975.

Alex.L.ter Braake

CANADA

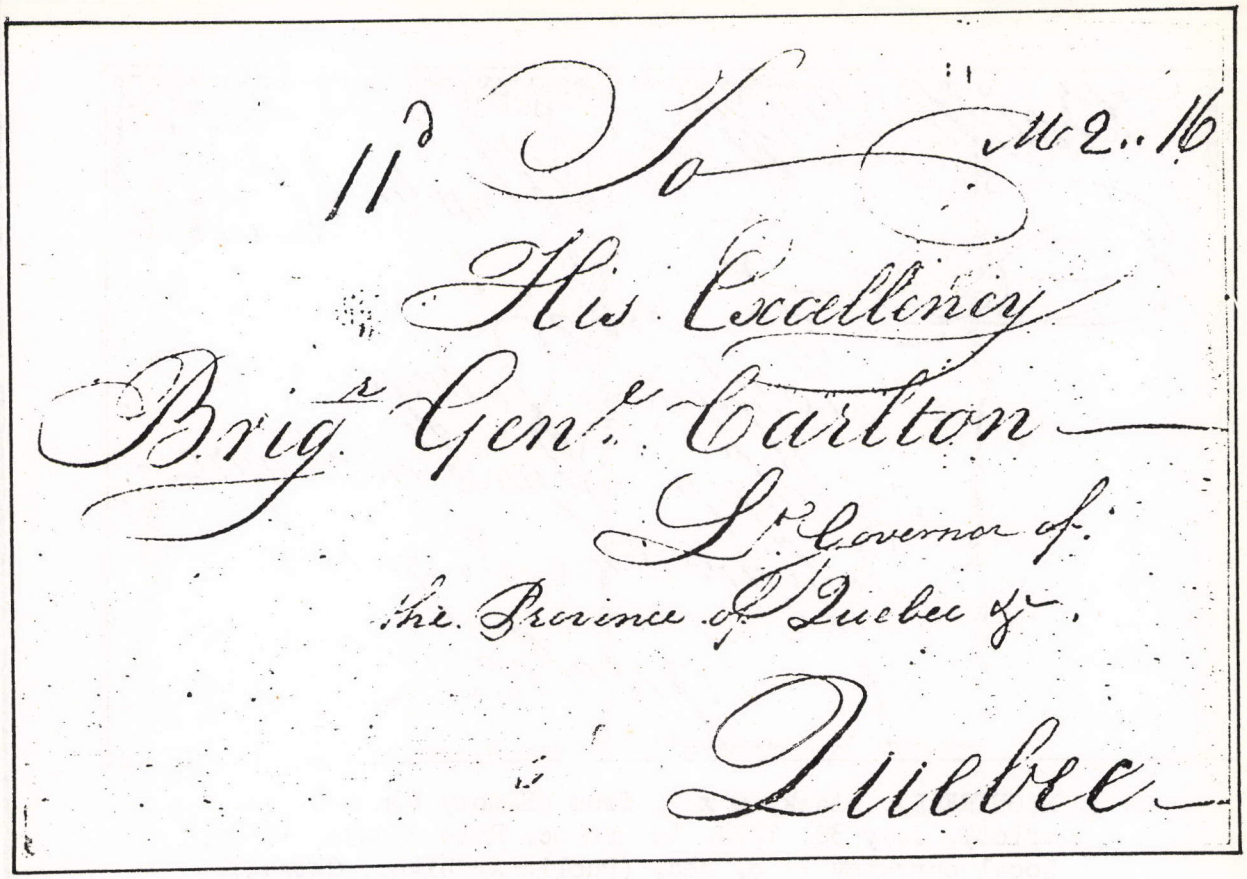


CA 1. B(erthier) from St. Ours (Quebec District). November 12, 1774, to Quebec. Rate 2 dwts, 8 gr. (Public Archives, Ottawa).

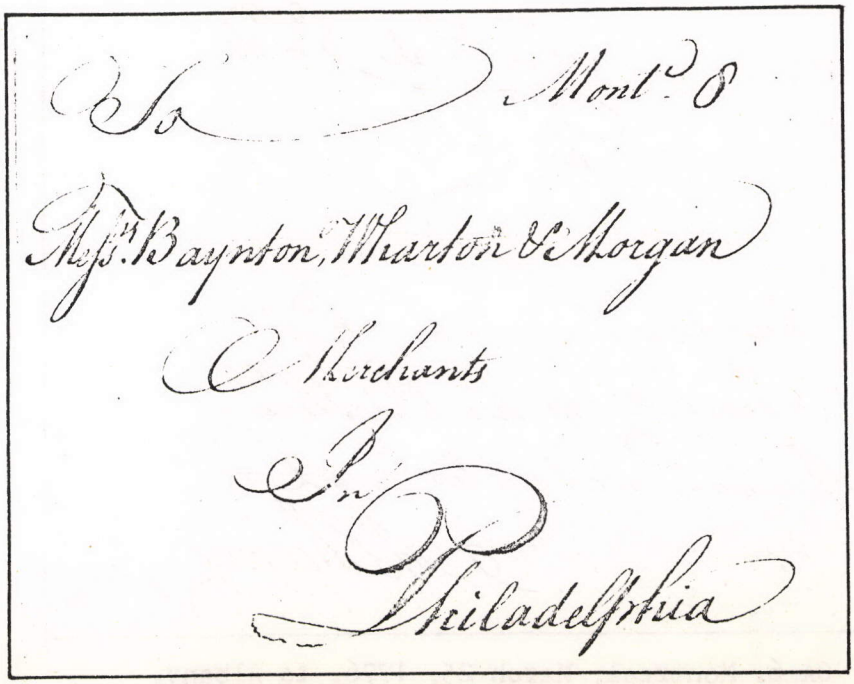


CA 2. M(ontreal) to Quebec, November 10, 1764. Rate 15 dwts. Local currency 4 sh. 2 d. (Public Archives Ottawa).

CANADA

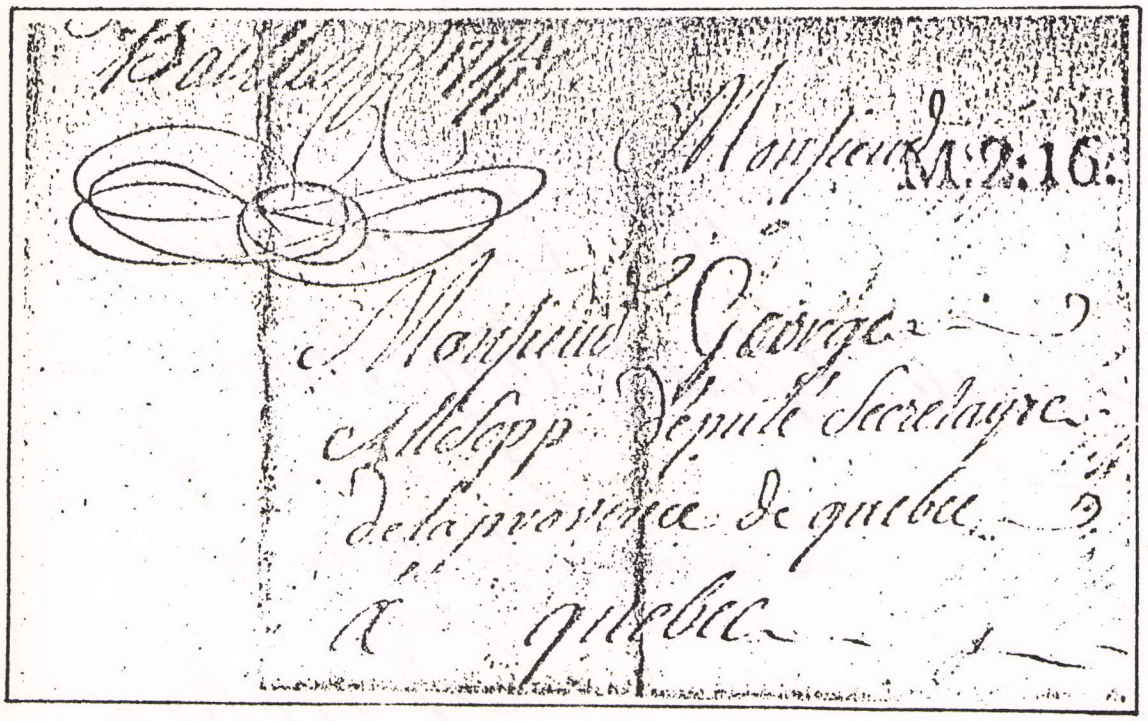


CA 3. M(ontreal(, April 13, 1765 to Quebec, April 22. Rate 2 dwts. 16 gr. Local currency 11 d. (Public Archives, Ottawa).

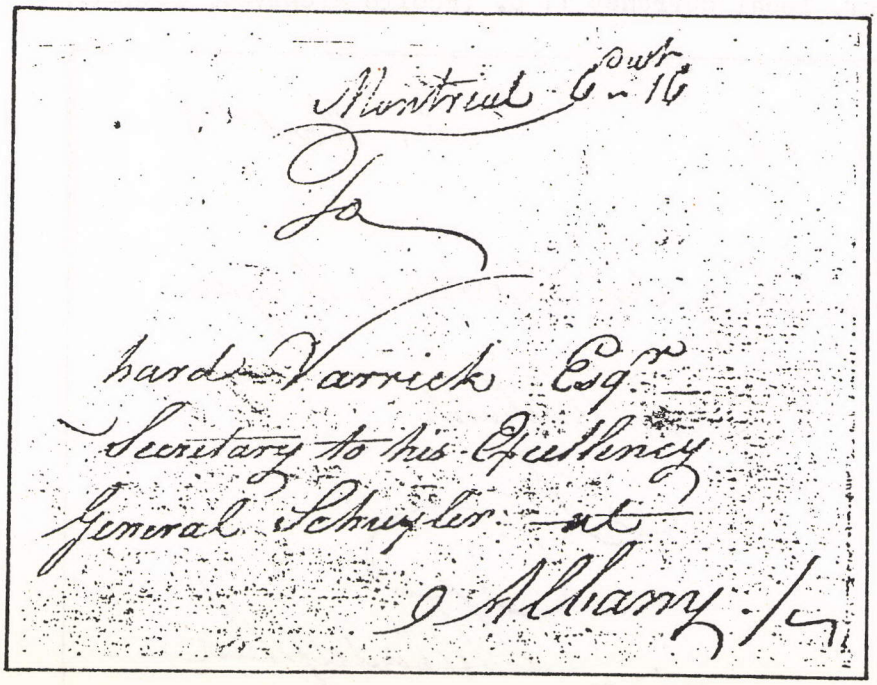


CA 4. Mont(real), May 27, 1765, to Philadelphia. Rate 8 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

CANADA

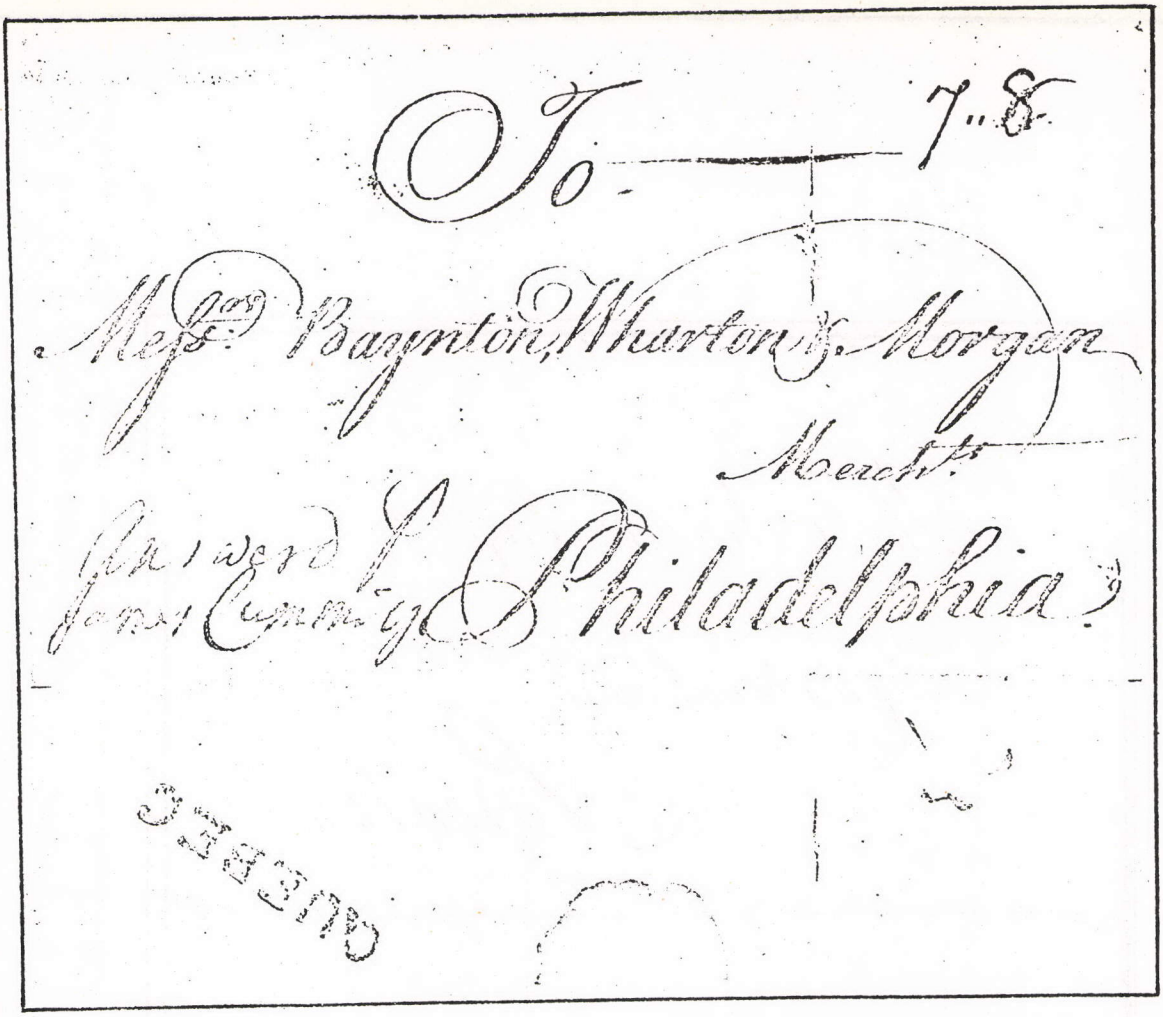


CA 5. M(ONTREAL), black, 9 x 7, from Chambly (Quebec District), July 30, 1774, to Quebec. Rate 2 dwts. 16 gr. Local currency 11 d. red. (Public Archives, Ottawa).

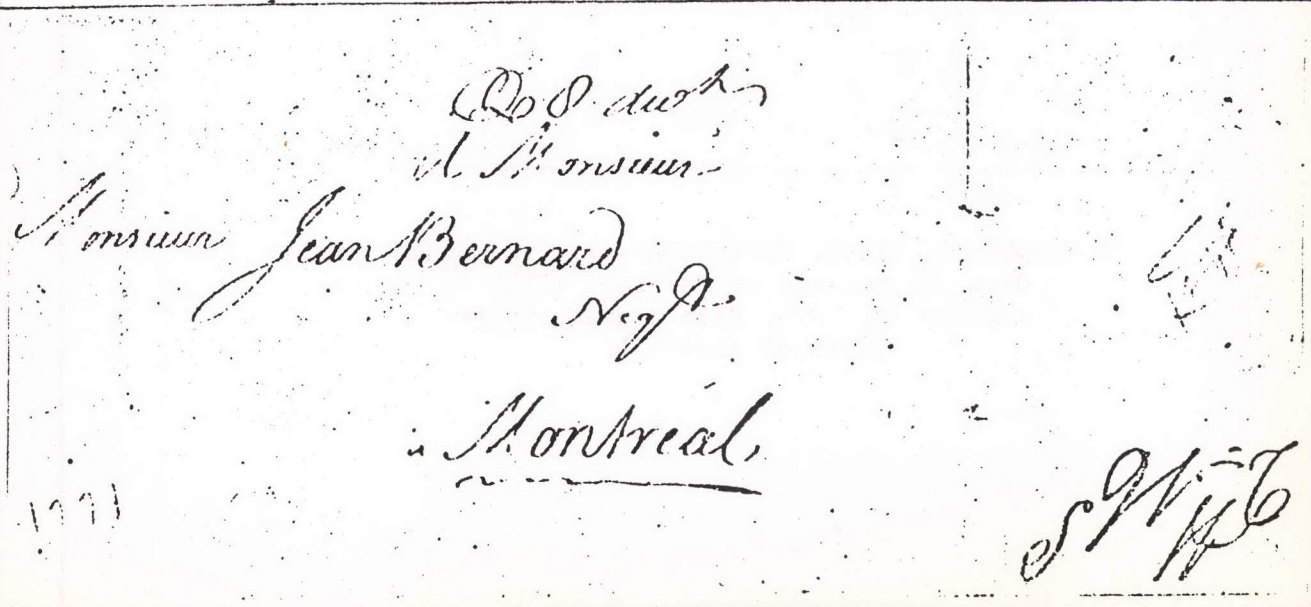


CA 6. Montreal, March 25, 1776, to Albany, April 26. Rate 6 dwts. 16 gr. (New York Historical Society).

CANADA

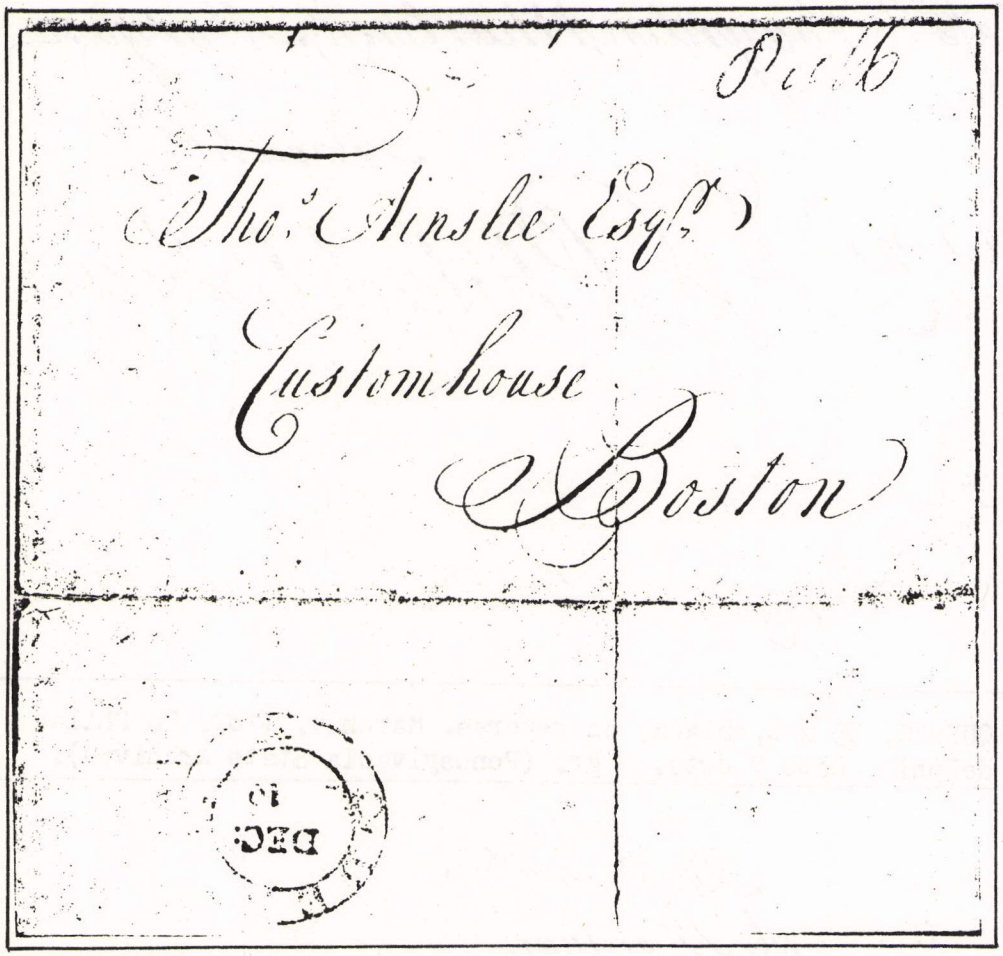


CA 7. QUEBEC, 35 x 6, black, on reverse. March 4, 1767. To Philadelphia. Rate 7 dwts. 8 gr. (Pennsylvania State Archives).



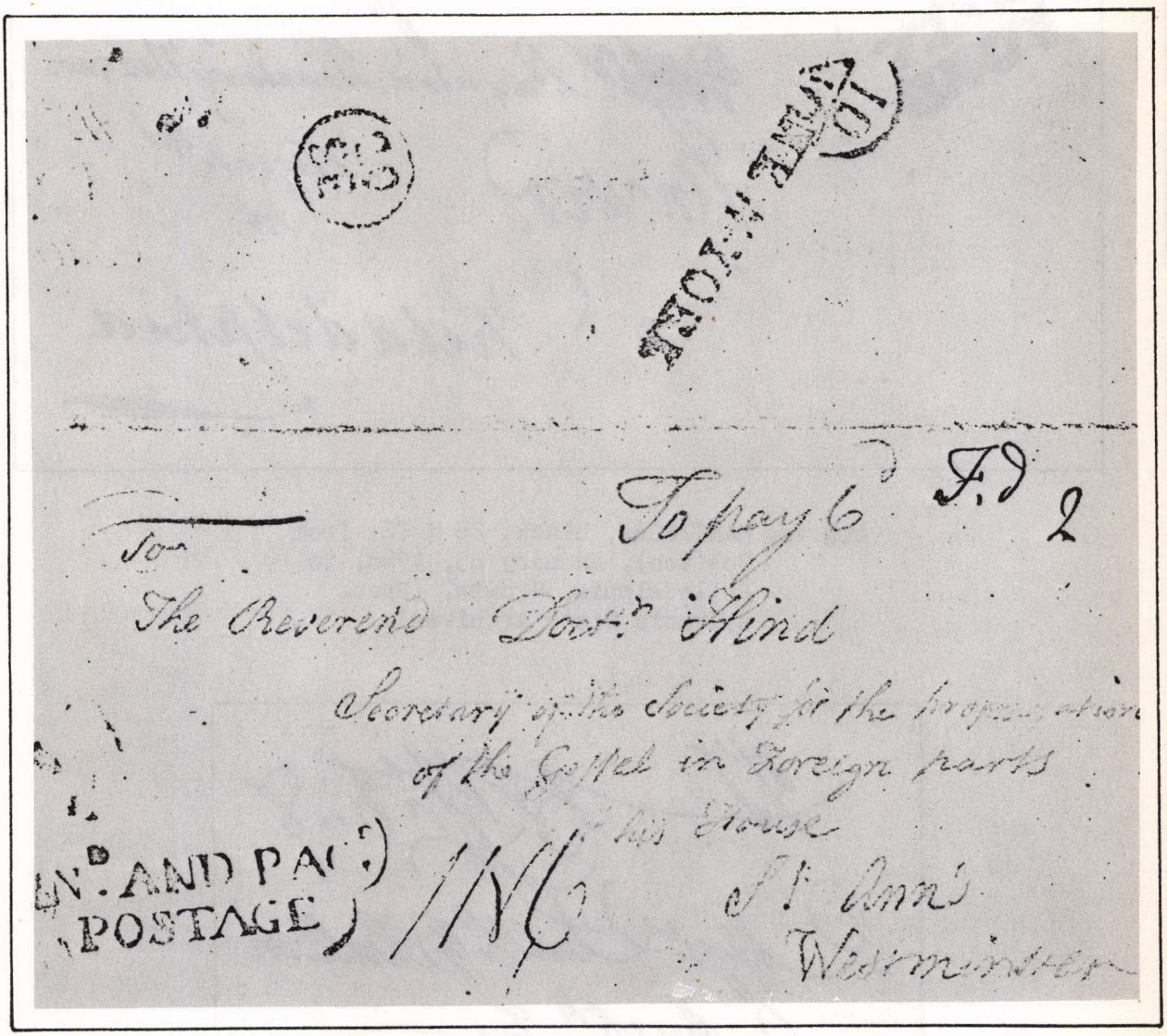
CA 8. Q(uebec), 1771, to Montreal. Rate 8 dwts, local currency 2 sh. 6 d. (Siegel Auction).

CANADA



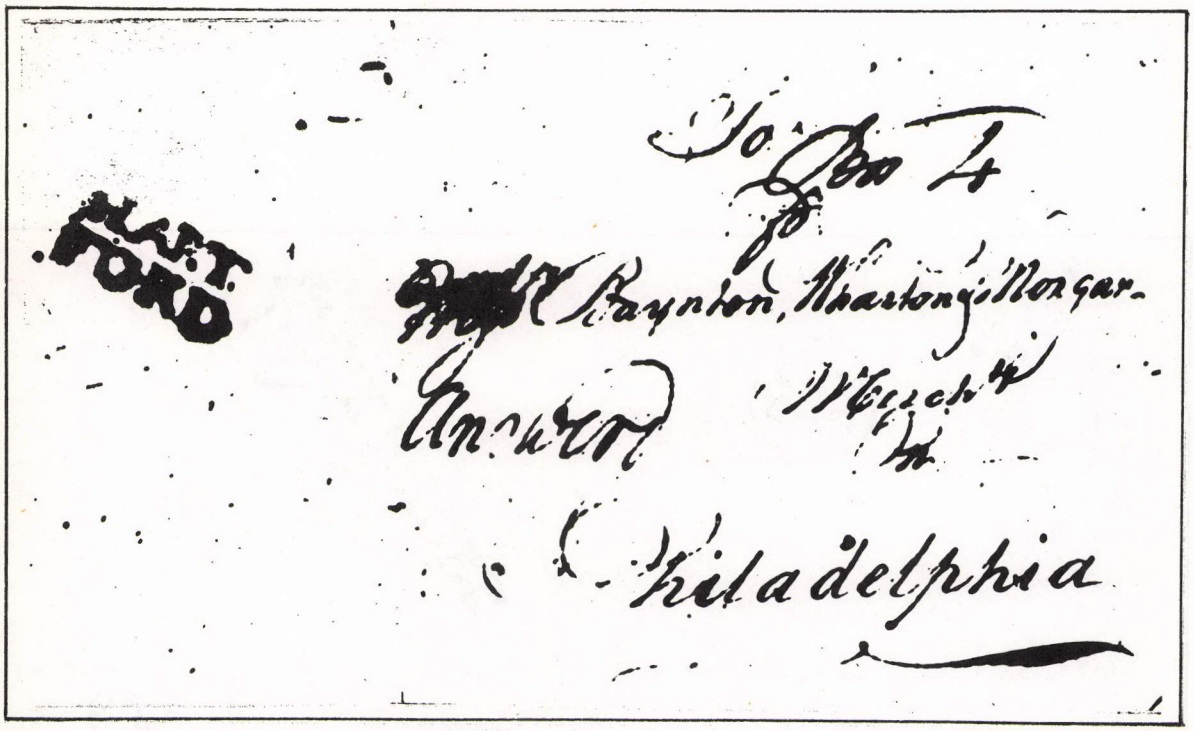
CA 9. QUEBEC, black, DEC(EMBER): 16, in double circle, diam. 27 mm. all on reverse, 1773, to Boston, January 27, 1774. Rate 8 dwts. 16 gr. (Siegel Auction).

CONNECTICUT

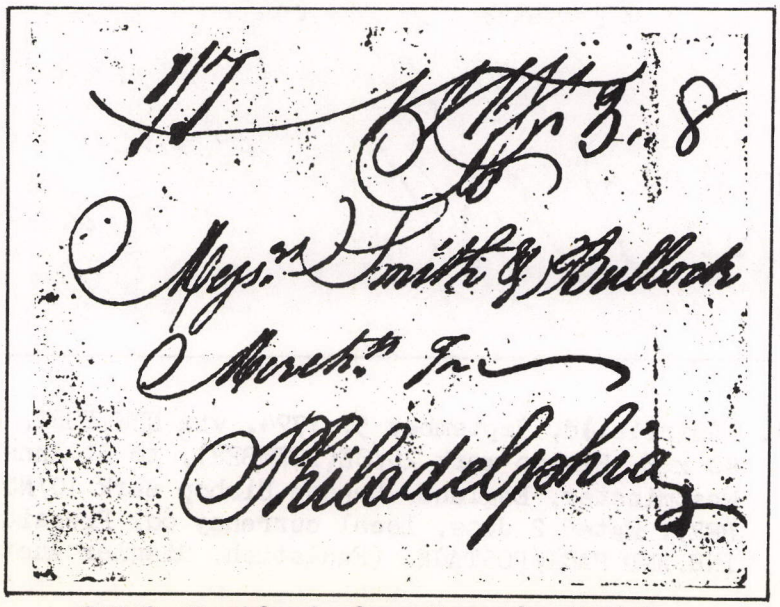


CON 1. F(airfiel)d, September 5, 1774, via NEW-YORK, black 40 x 5, Bishop mark 20/SE(PTEMBER), to St.Anne's, Westminster, England. London Bishop mark 10/NO(VEMBER). Rated 2 dwts, local currency 6d. Prepaid 1N6, IND.AND PACT/POSTAGE. (Faulstich, Siegler Auction).

CONNECTICUT

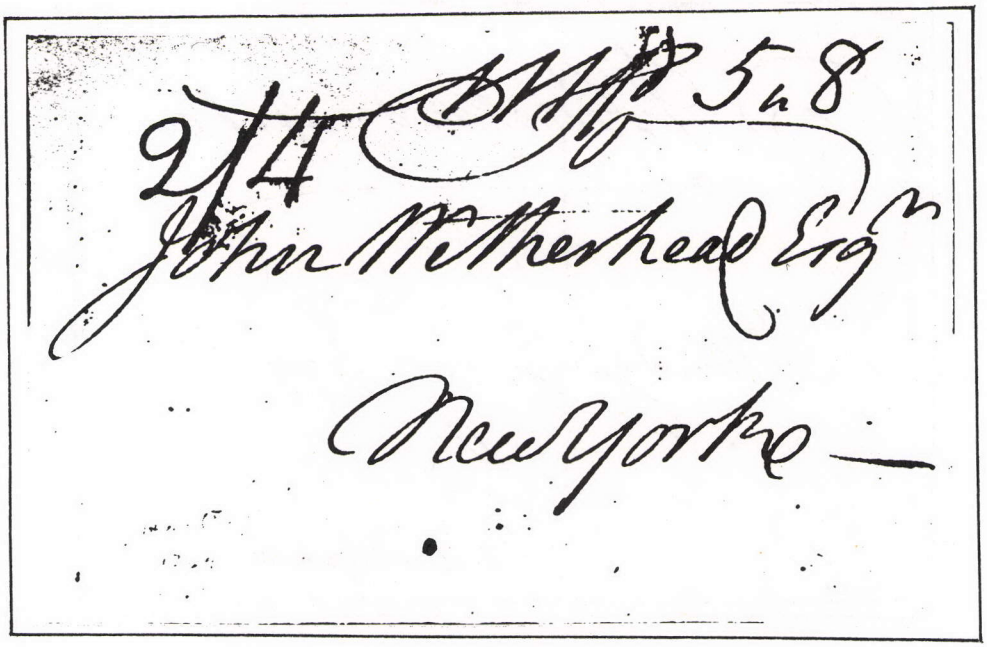


CON 1a. HART/FORD, black, 28 x 12, from Bos(ton), January 23, 1766, to Philadelphia. 4 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

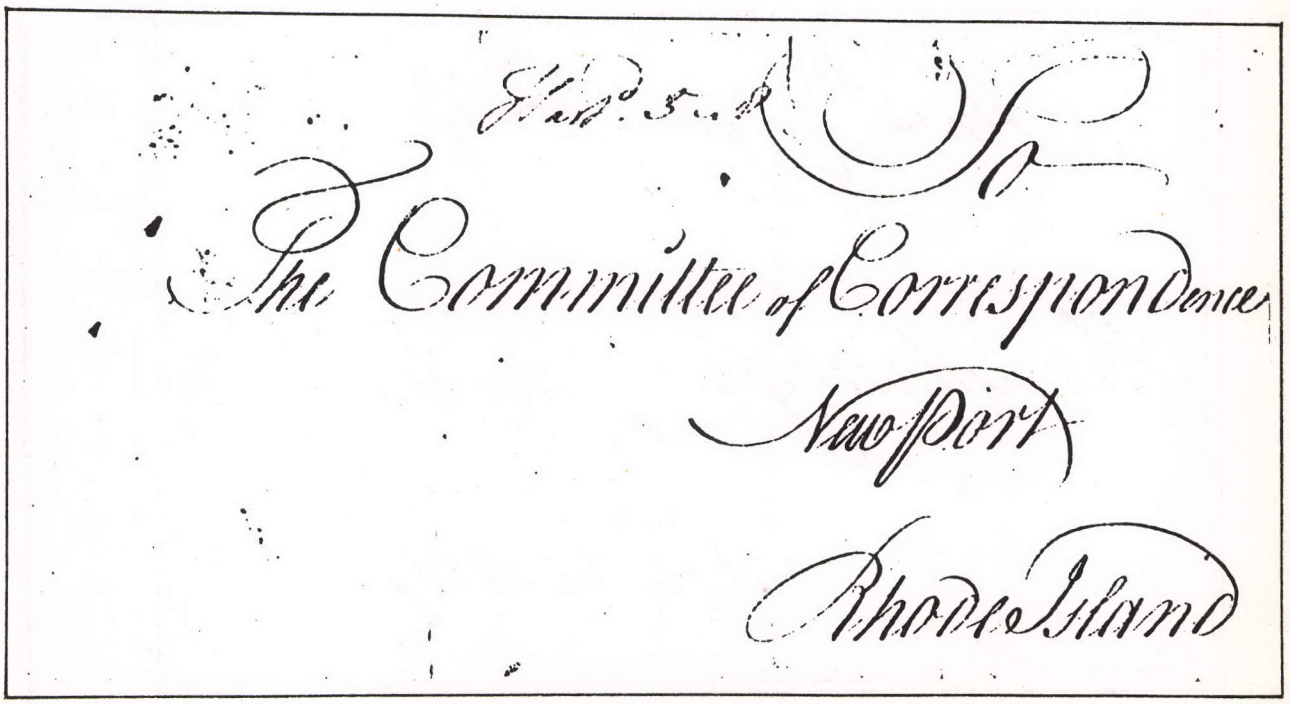


CON 2. Hartford, from Grenada, B.W.I., June 4, 1769. Ship letter to Philadelphia. 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

CONNECTICUT

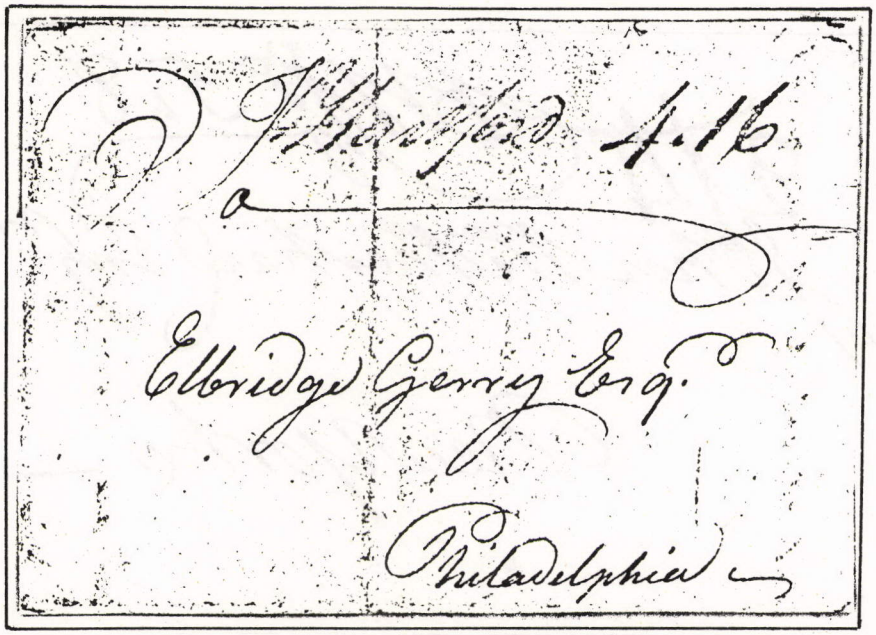


CON 3. Hartford, May 29, 1769, to New York. Double letter, 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Edwin Mayer).

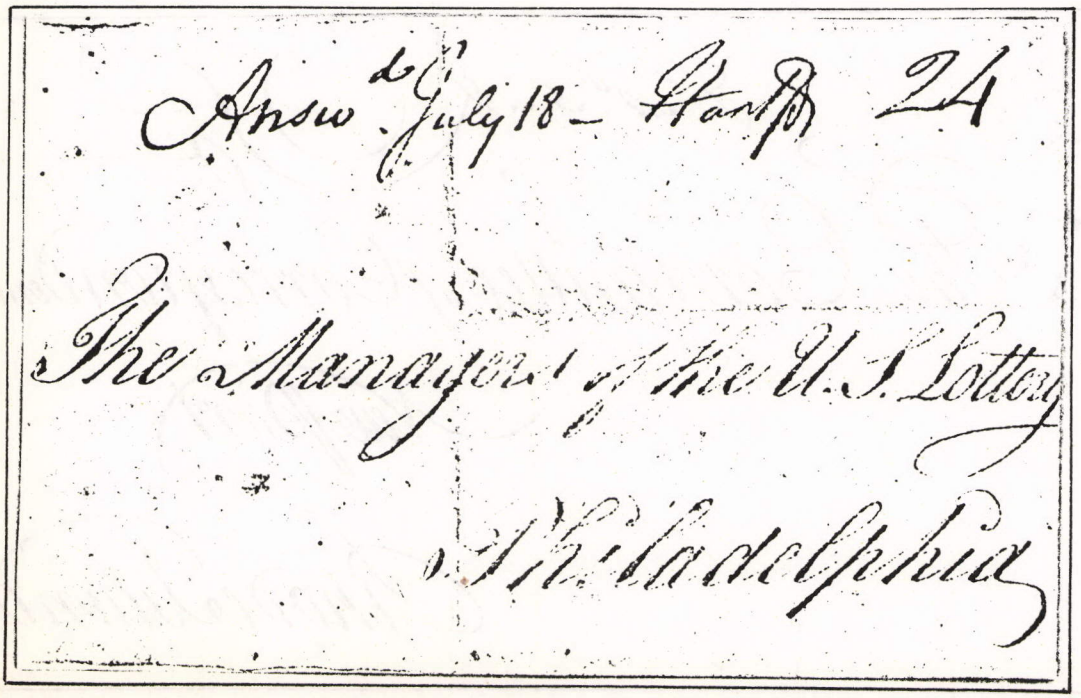


CON 4. Hart(for)d, June 4, 1774, via Boston, to New Port, double letter, 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Rhode Island State Archives).

CONNECTICUT

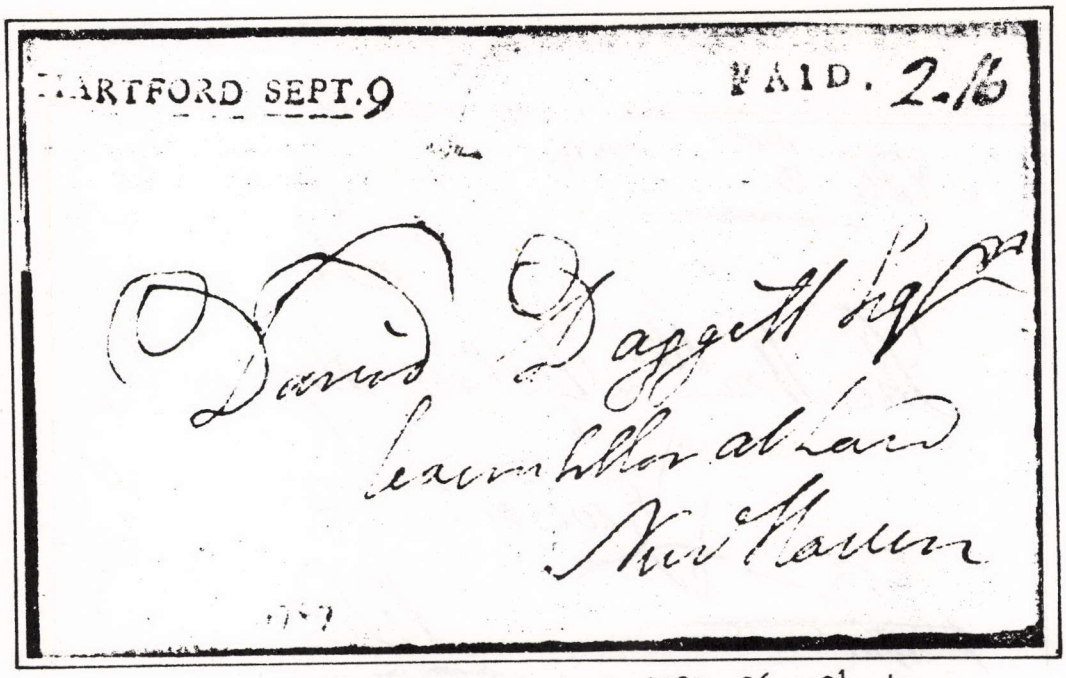


CON 5. Hartford, red, from Watertown, April 3, 1776, to Philadelphia. 4 dwts, 16 gr. (W.L.Clements Library, Ann Arbor).

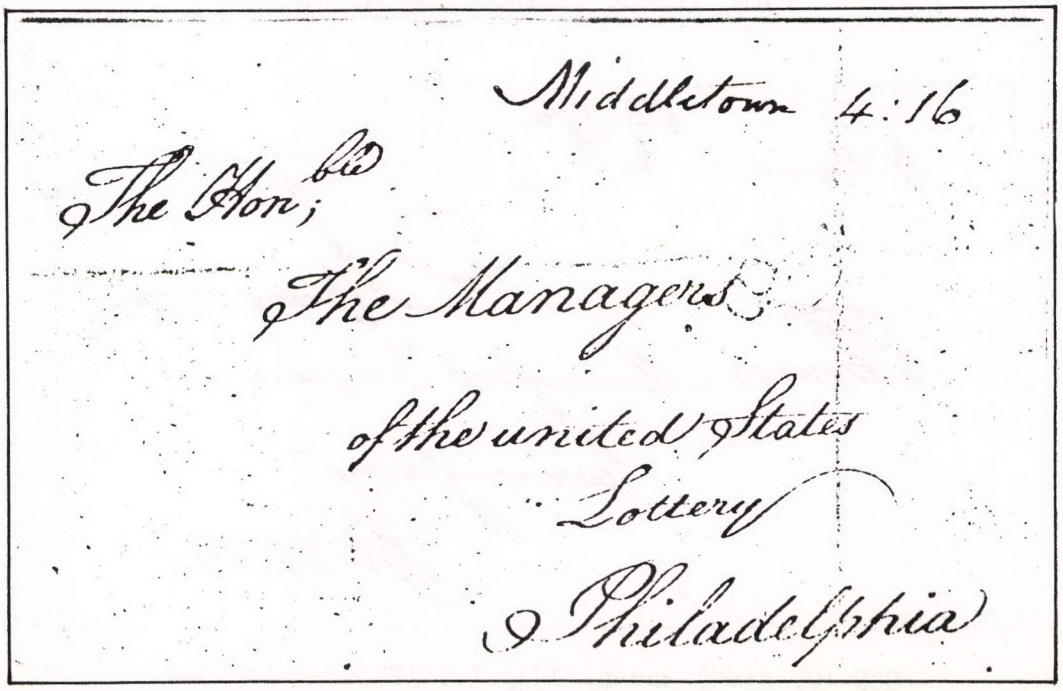


CON 6. Hartf(or)d, April 24, 1779, to Philadelphia. One ounce rate 24 dwts. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

CONNECTICUT

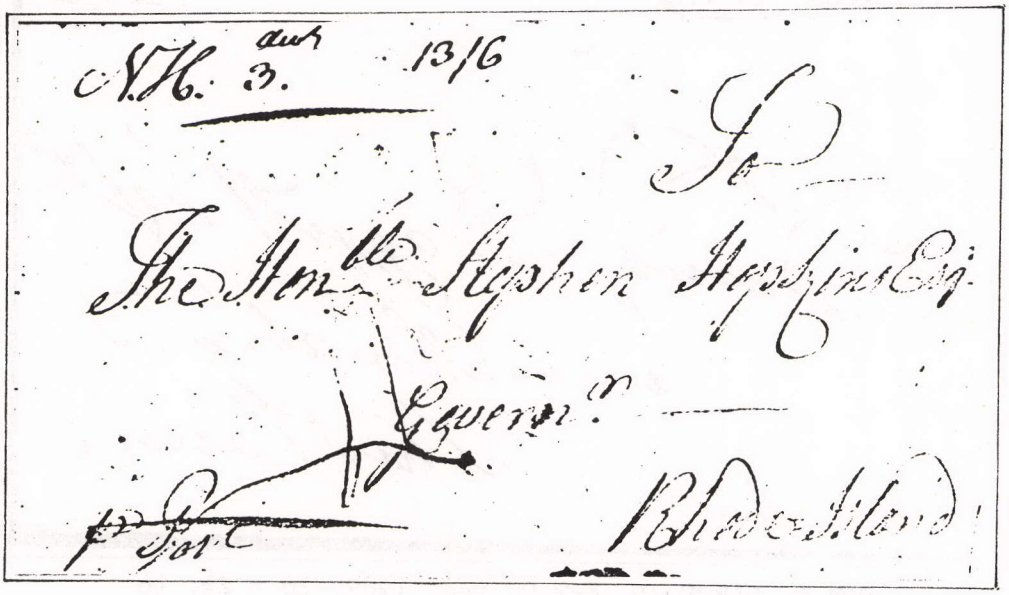


CON 7. HARTFORD SEPT.9, red, 1787, 26 x 2½, to New Haven. PAID, black, 2 dwts, 16gr. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

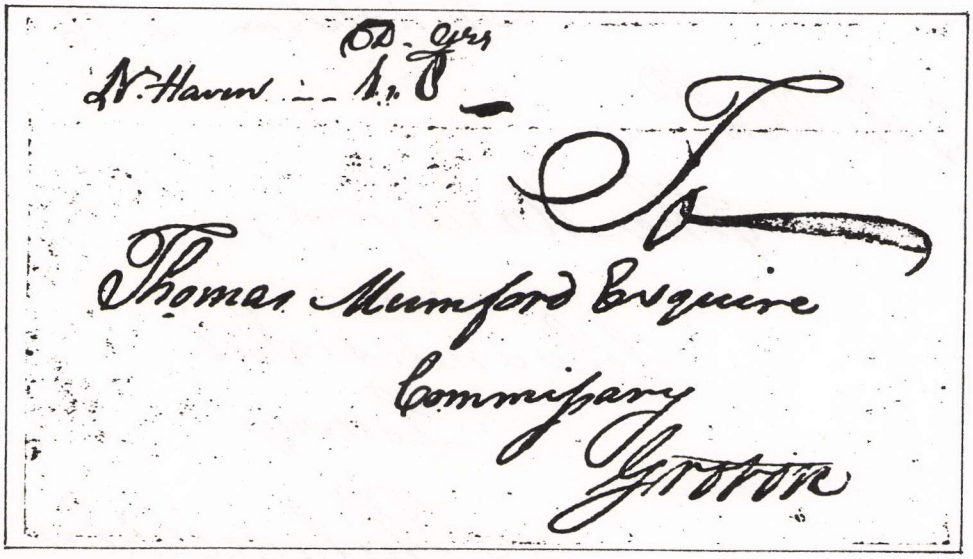


CON 8. Middletown, June 10, 1777, to Philadelphia. 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

CONNECTICUT

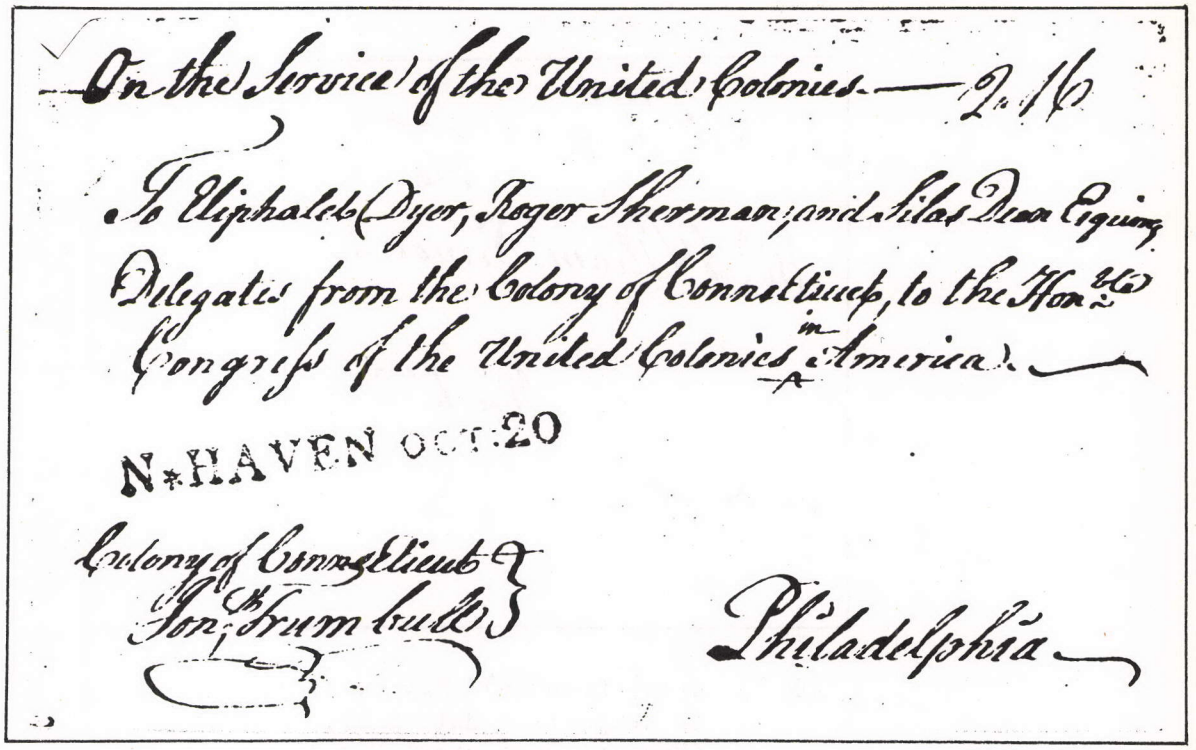


CON 9. N(ew) H(aven), June 1, 1756, to Newport, R.I. 3 dwts. Local currency 13/6. (Rhode Island State Archives).

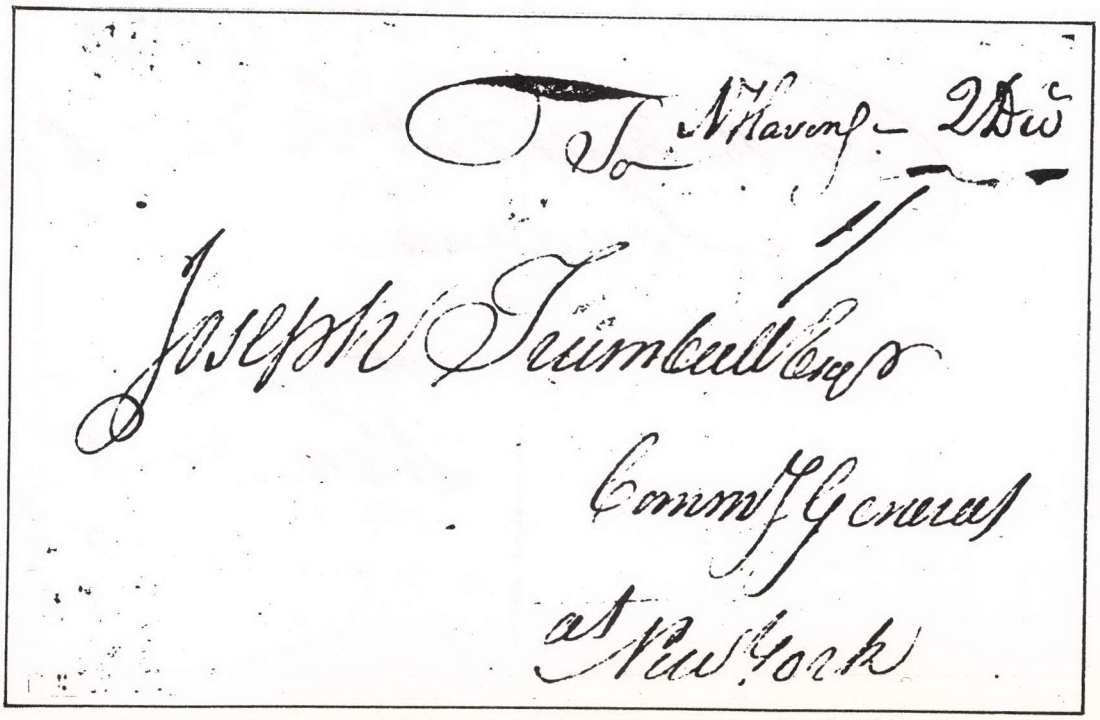


CON 10. N(ew) Haven, July 18, 1775, to Groton, Con. 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Connecticut Historical Society).

CONNECTICUT

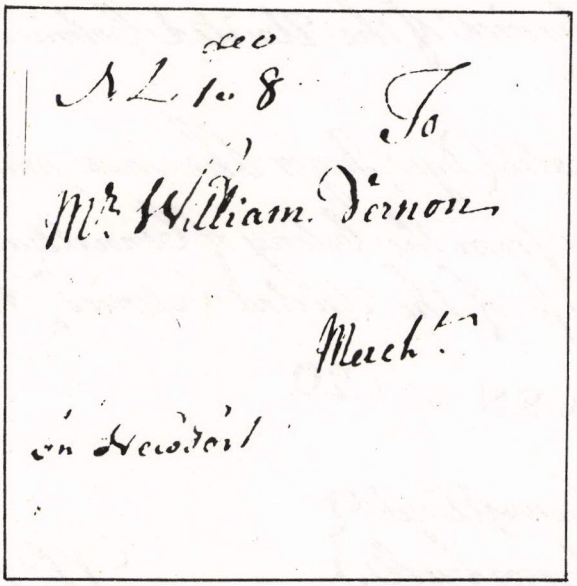


CON 11. N*HAVEN OCT.20, 1775, red, 45 x 4½, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Connecticut Historical Society).

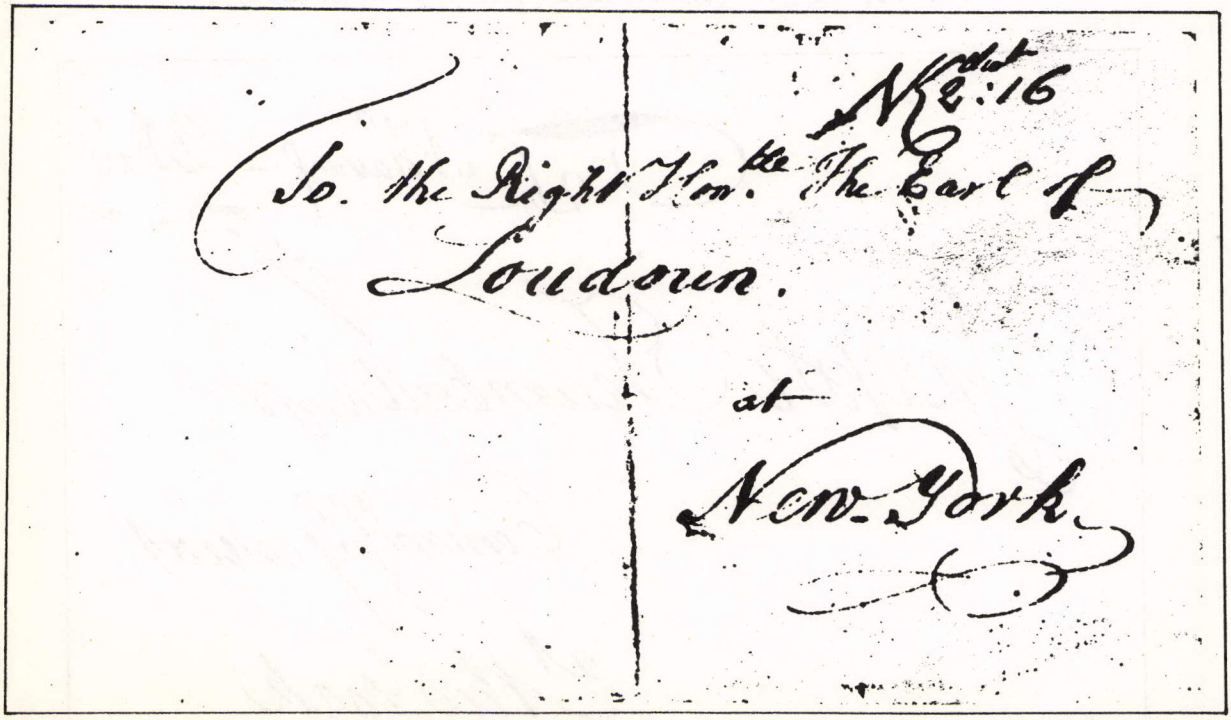


CON 12. N(ew) Haven, from Middletown, April 1, 1776, to New York. 2 dwts. 1/. (Connecticut Historical Society).

CONNECTICUT

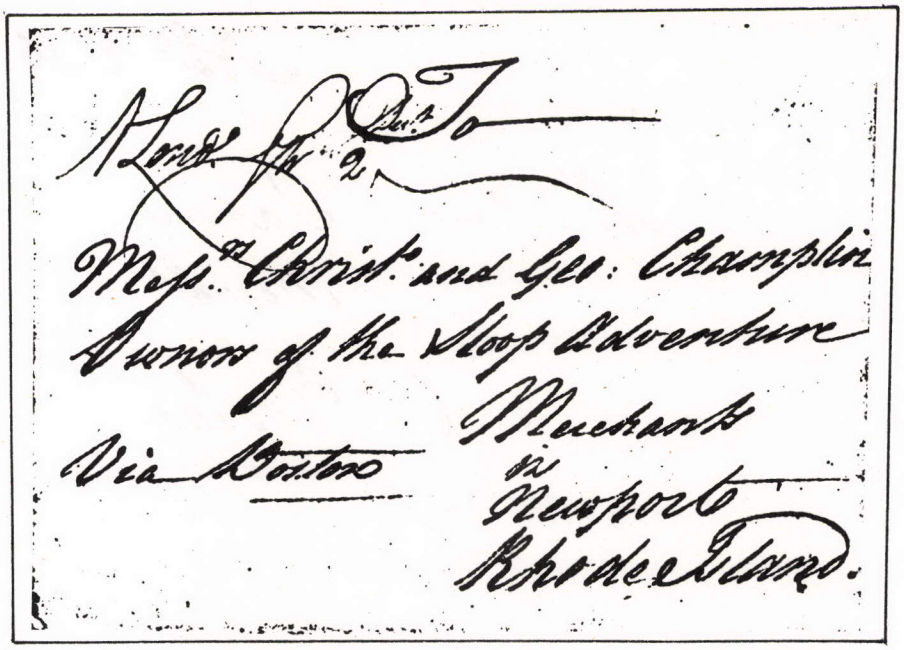


CON 13. N(ew) L(ondon), May 9, 1755, to Newport. 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Newport Historical Soc.)

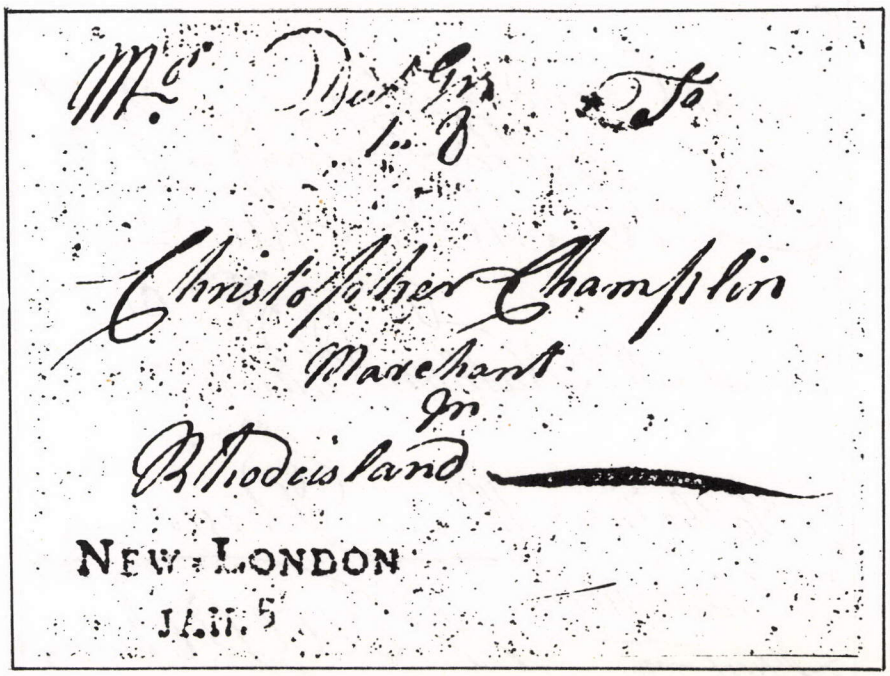


CON 14. N(ew) L(ondon), December 17, 1756, to New York. 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Huntington Library, San Marino, HM 2360).

CONNECTICUT

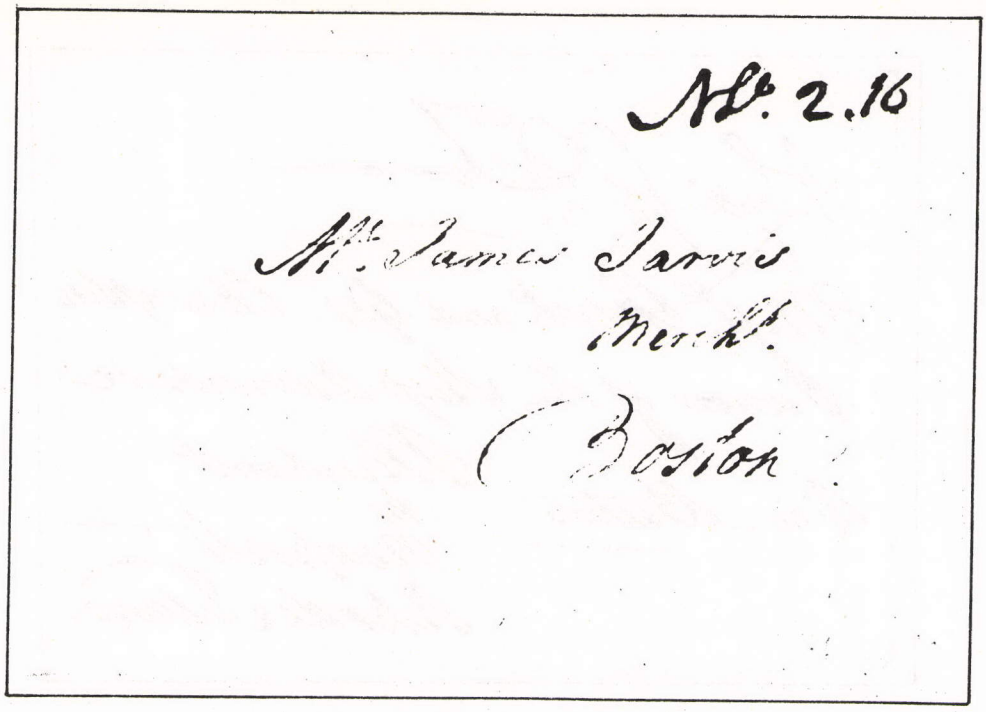


CON 15. N(ew) Lond(on), from Barbados, B.W.I. February 16, 1773, to Newport via Boston. Ship letter 2. dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



CON 16. NEW*LONDON/JAN.5, black, 42 x 4, from Philadelphia, December 25, 1774, to Rhode Island (Newport). 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

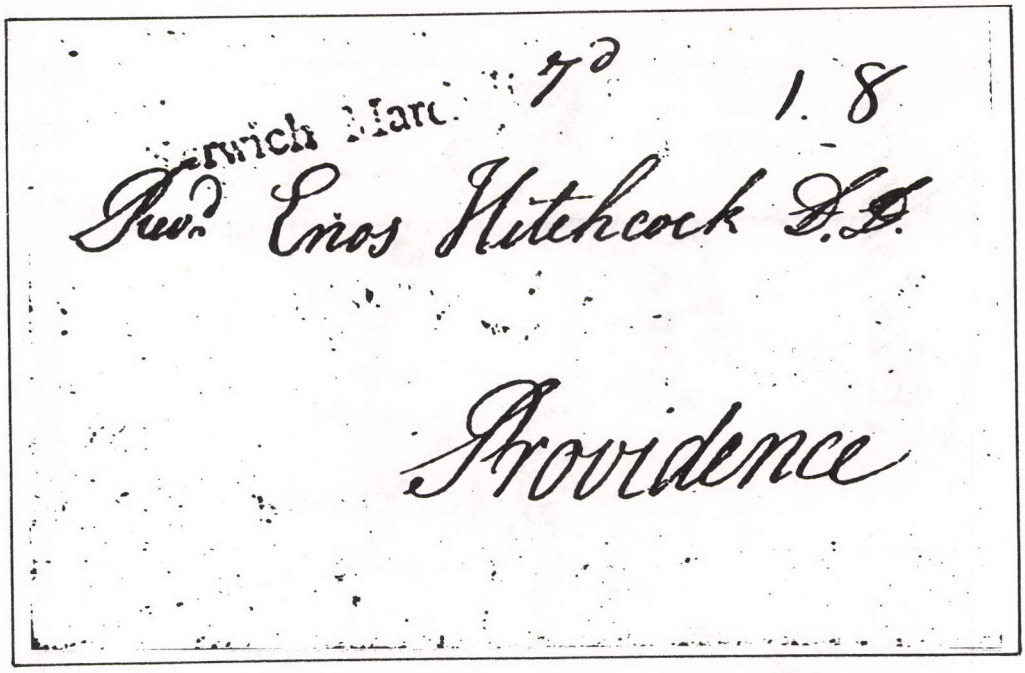
CONNECTICUT



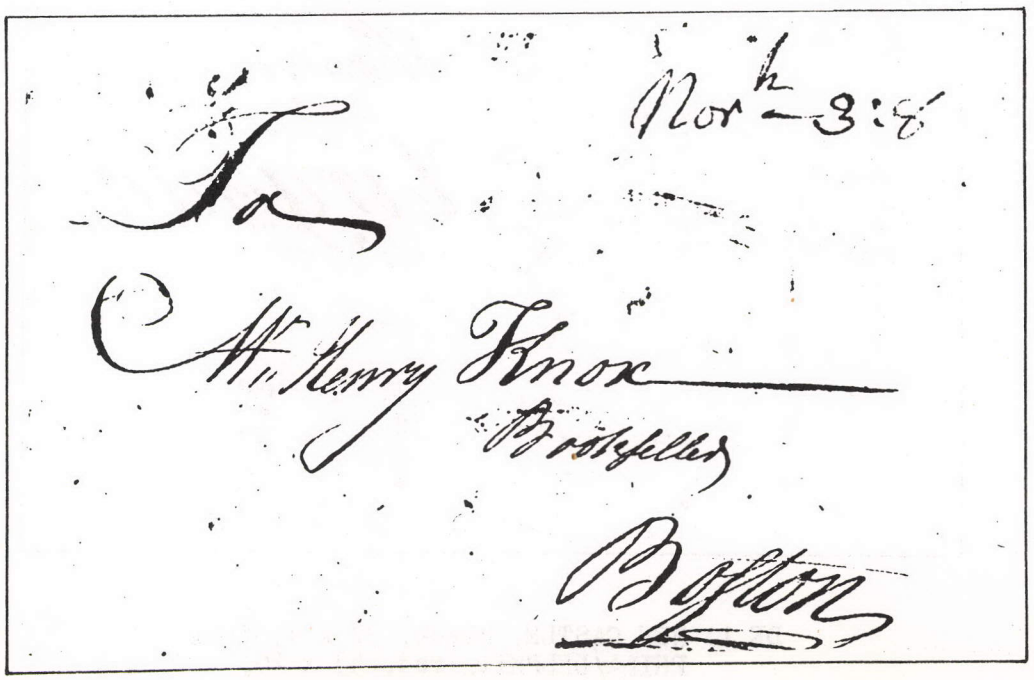
CON 17. N(ew) L°(ndon), May 3, 1782, to Boston. 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Connecticut Historical Society).

CON 18. N(ew) London, July 12, 1787. Way via Hartford to Worcester. 5 dwts, 8 gr. (American Antiquarian Society).

CONNECTICUT

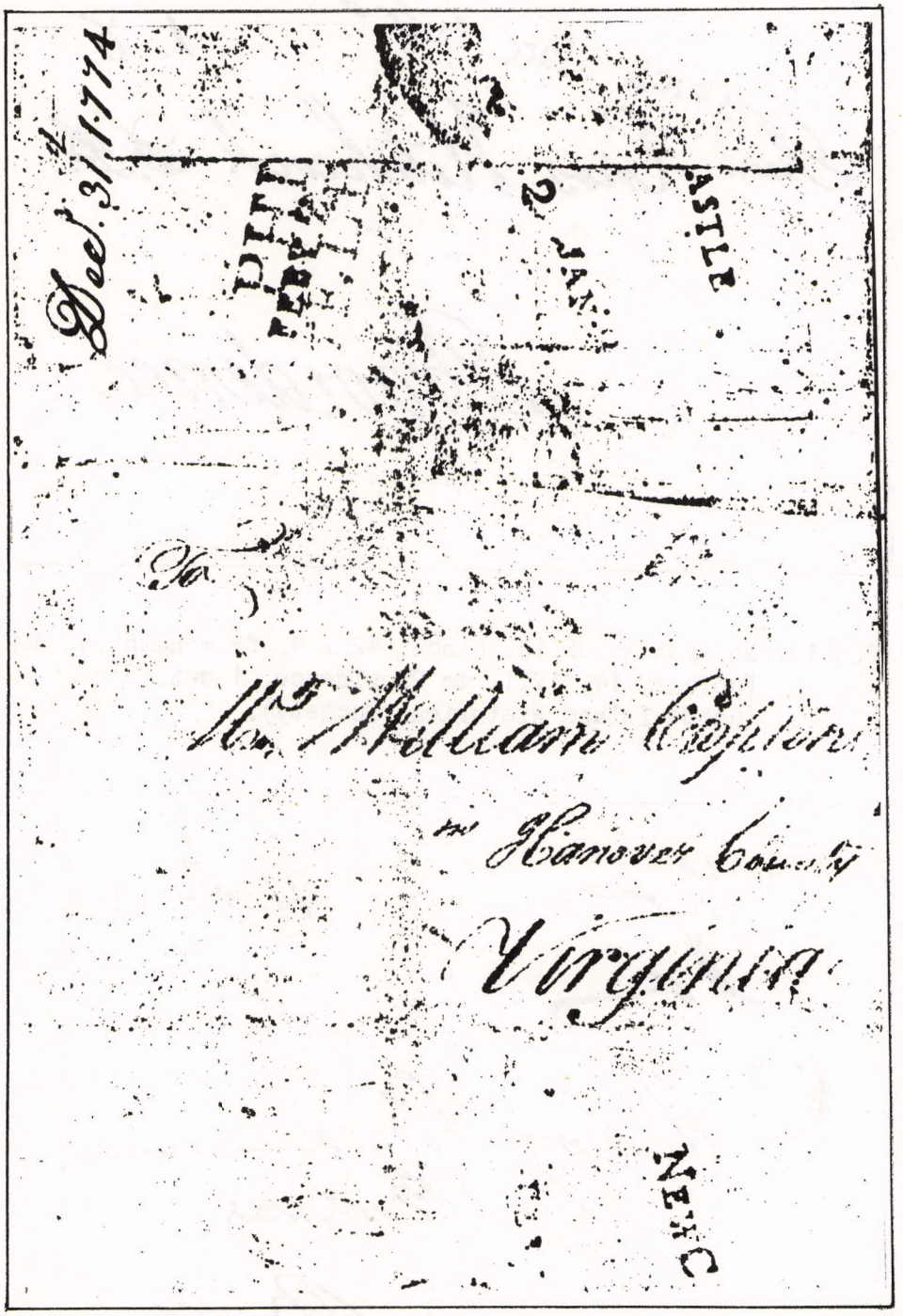


CON 19. Norwich March 10, black, 42 x 4, from Hampton, N.H. February 14, 1771, to Providence. 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).



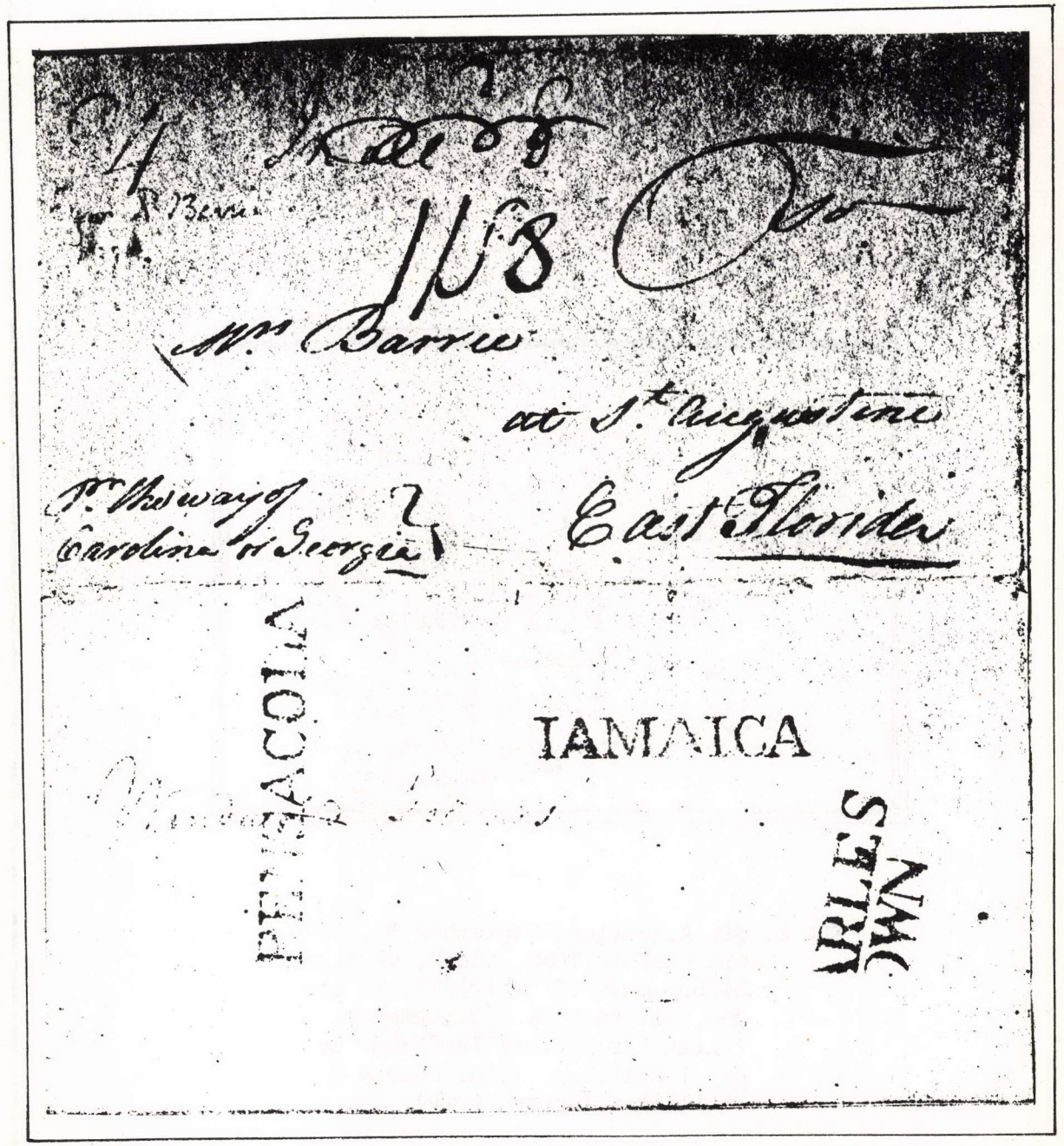
CON 20. Nor(wic)^{h}, November 20, 1773, to Boston. 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

DELAWARE



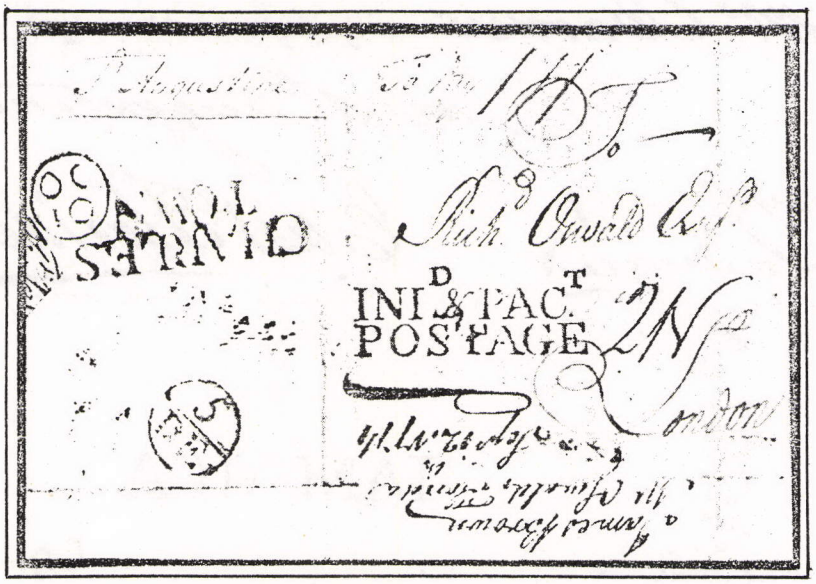
DE 1. NEW CASTLE, black, 37 x 4, from PHILA/DELPHIA, red, 53 x 16, December 31, 1774, to Hanover County, Va. (Duke University).

FLORIDA



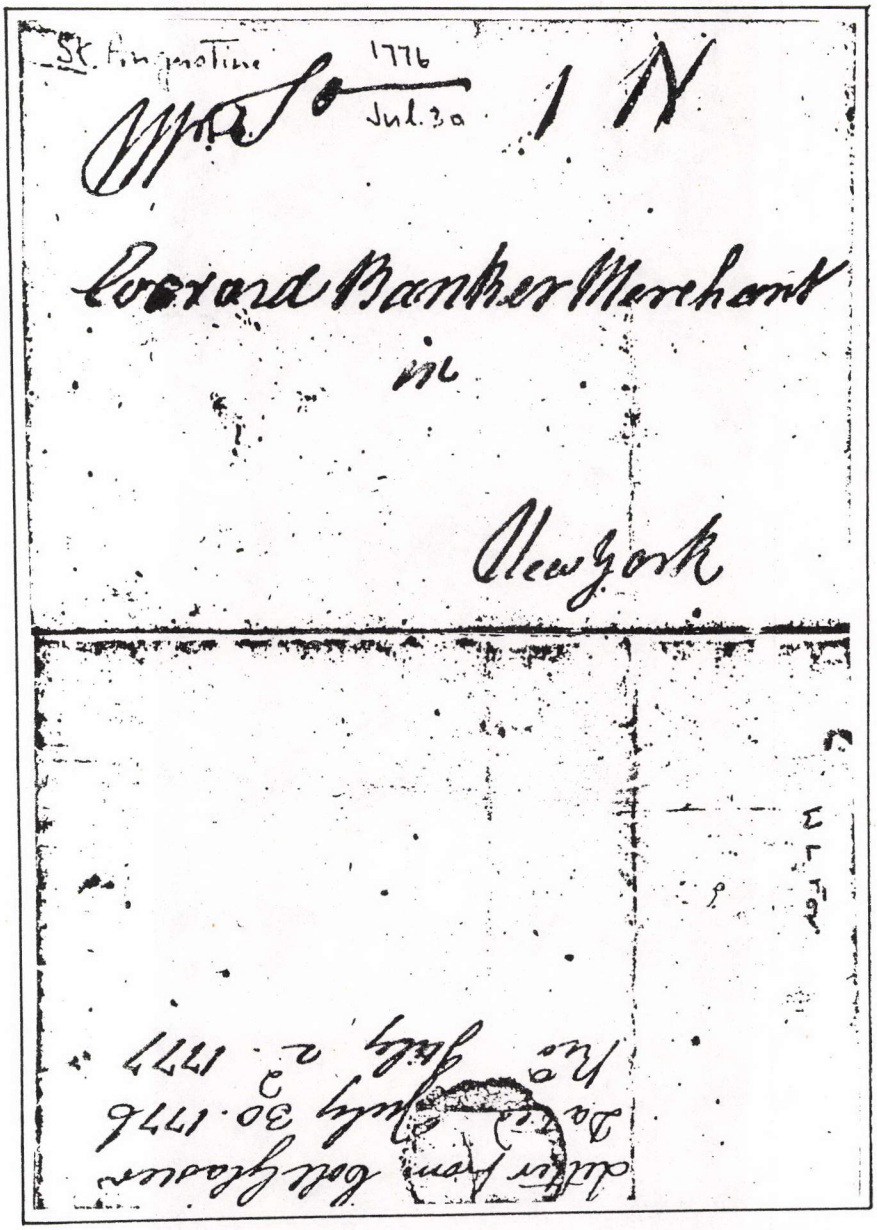
FLA 1. PENSACOLA, black, 56 x 6, from St. Vincent, B.W.I., DECEMBER 14, 1772, via IAMAICA, black, 43 x 6, and CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, all on reverse, to St. Augustine, April 5, 1773. Rate 1 shilling, 8 pence. (Siegel Auction).

FLORIDA



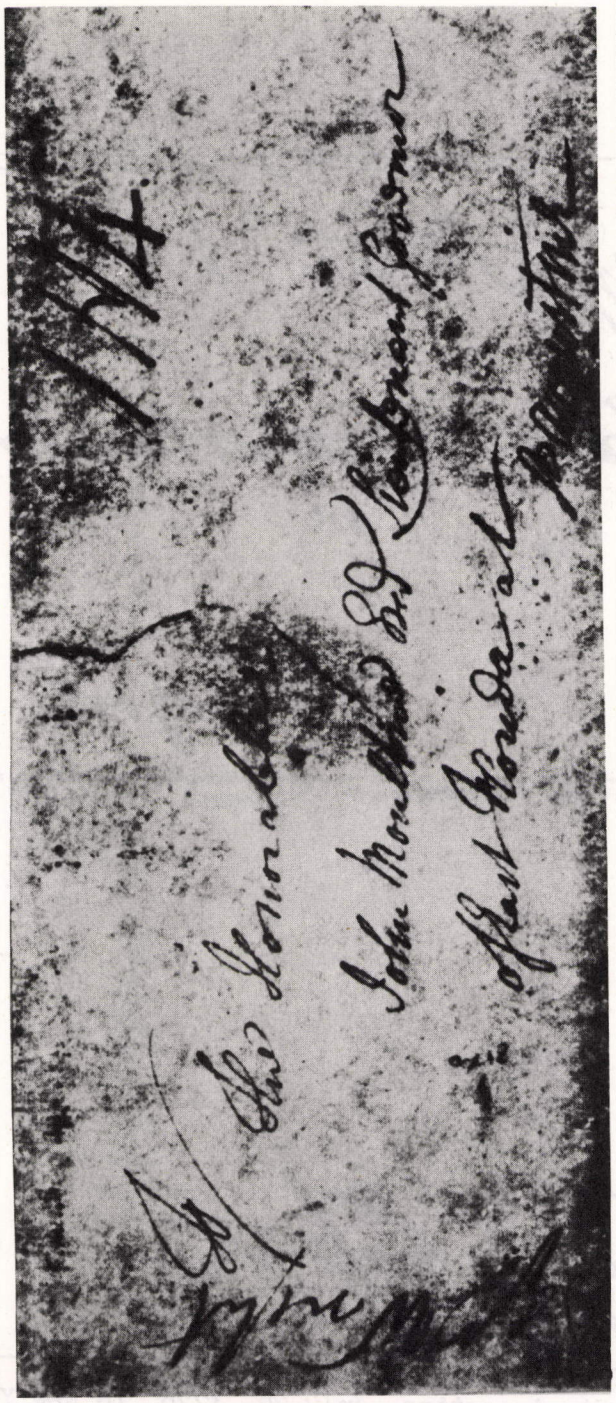
FLA 2. St. Augustine, September 12, 1774, via CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, Bishop mark OC(tober)/10, to London, Bishop mark 5/DE(cember). INL(an)^{D} & PAC(ke)^{T}/POSTAGE. To pay 1 shilling, total charge 2 shillings. (Robson Lowe).

FLORIDA



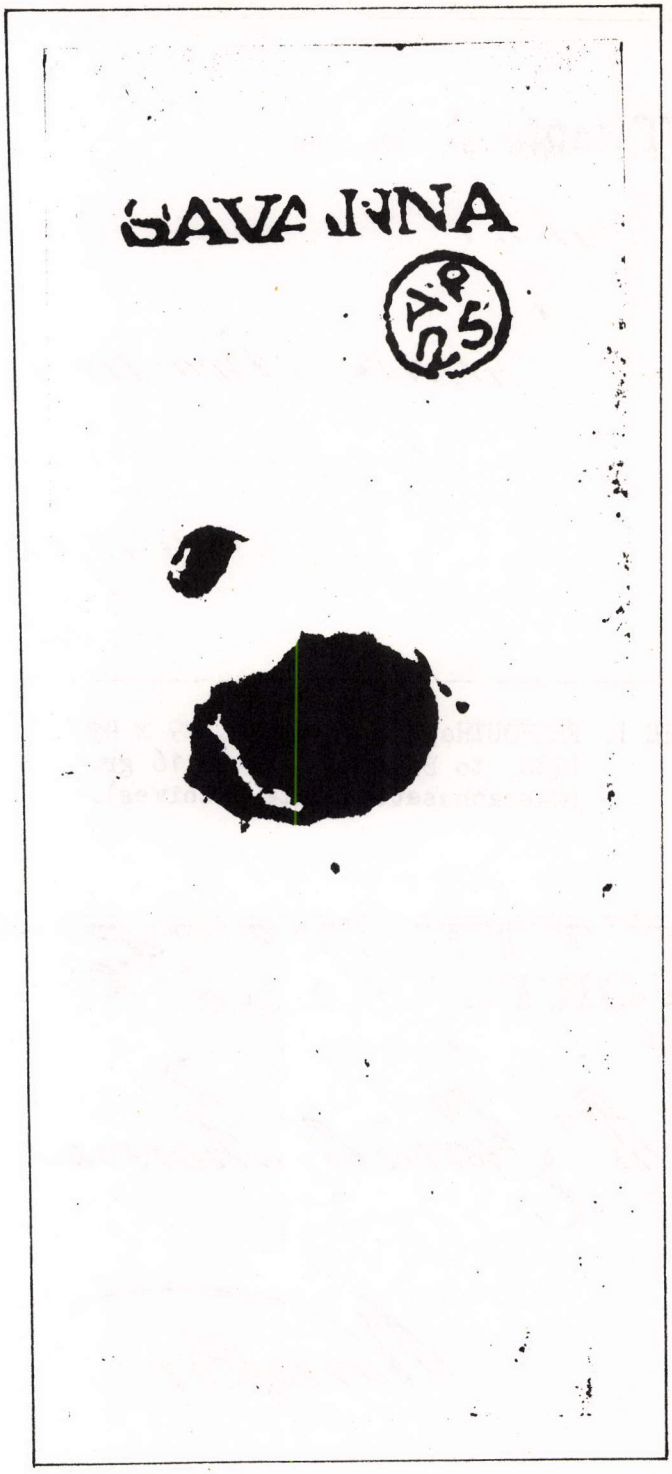
FLA 3. St. Augustine, July 30, 1776, to New York, July 2, 1777. Rate 1 shilling. (Joseph Carson).

GEORGIA



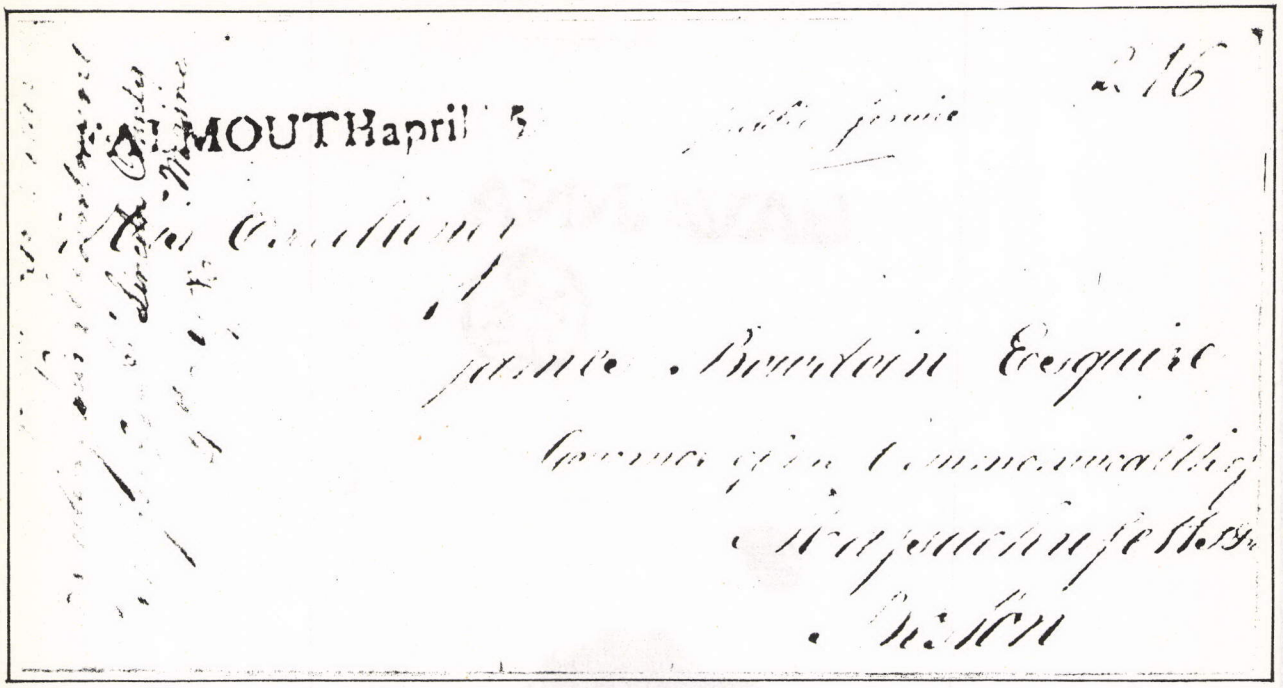
GA 1. SAVANNA, black, 51 x 6, April 25, 1765. 1/4. To St.Augustine. (Siegel Auction). (See GA 1A.)

GEORGIA



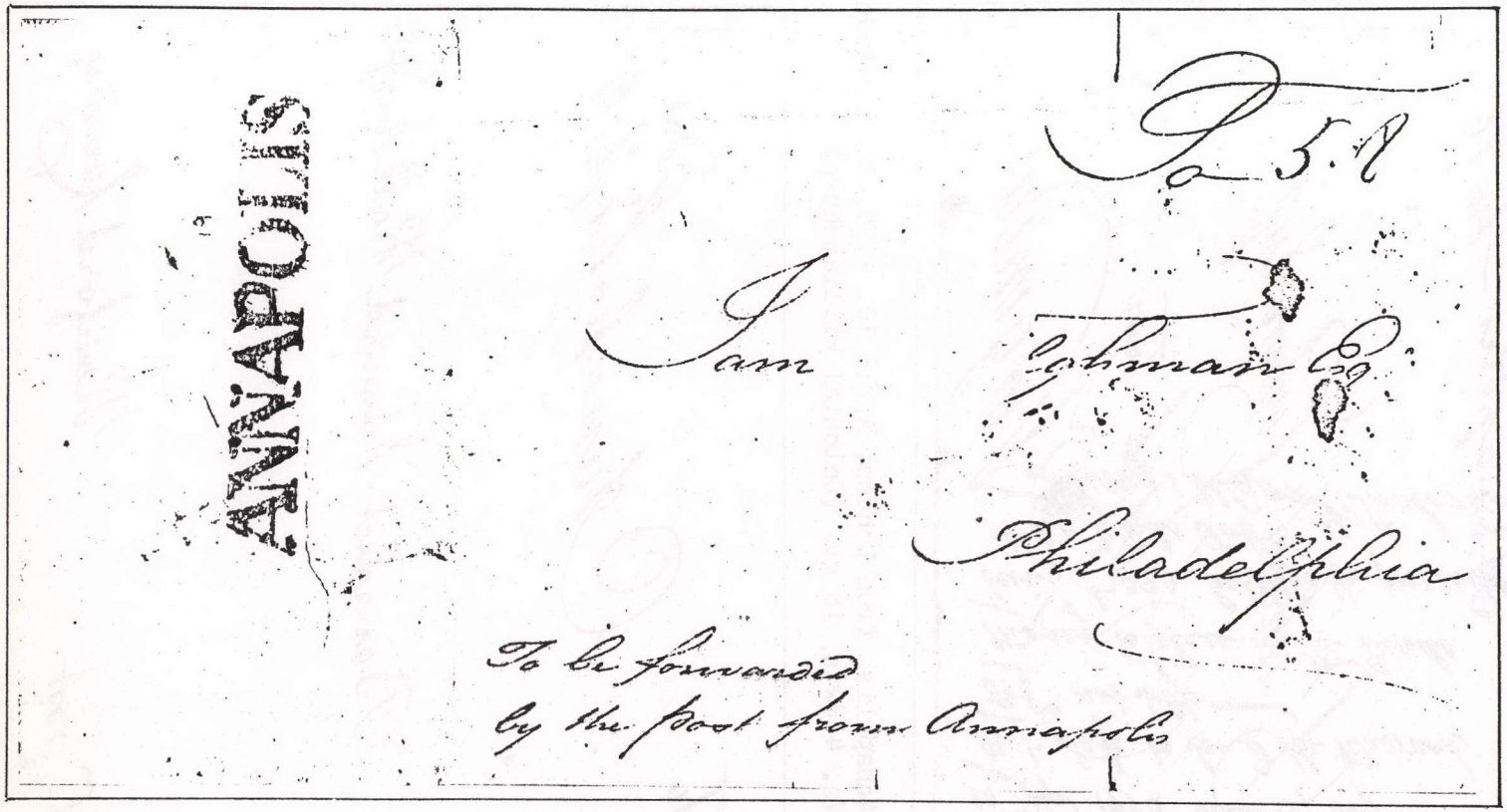
GA 1A. SAVANNA, black. 51 x 6 (on reverse of GA 1.) Bishop mark AP/25.

MAINE



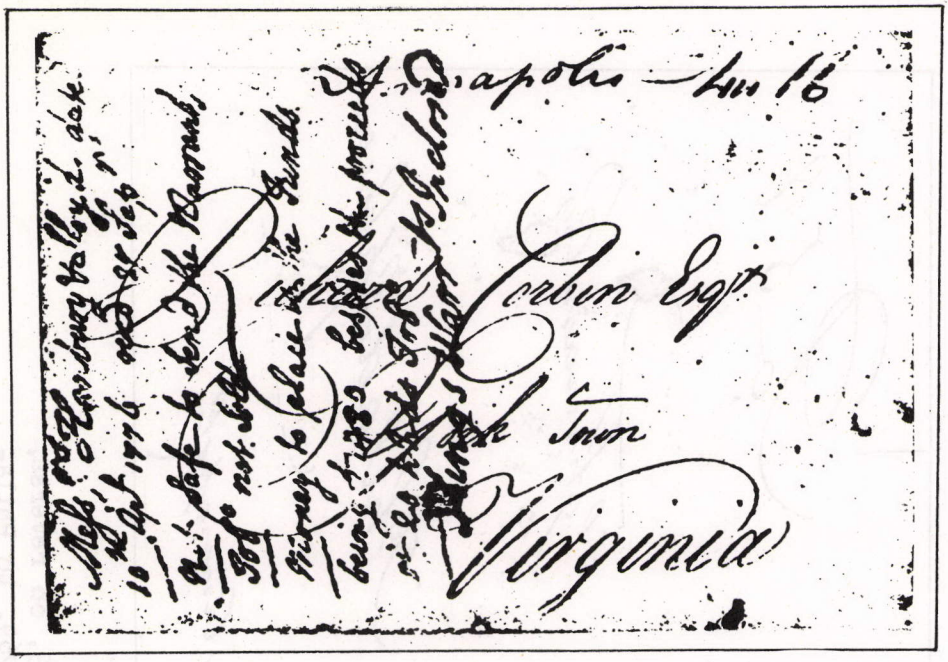
ME 1. FALMOUTHapril 5, black, 29 x 4½, 1786, to Boston. 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Massachusetts State Archives).

ME 2. PORTLAND dec 14, black, 37 x 4, 1787. Free. To Worchester. (American Antiquarian Society).

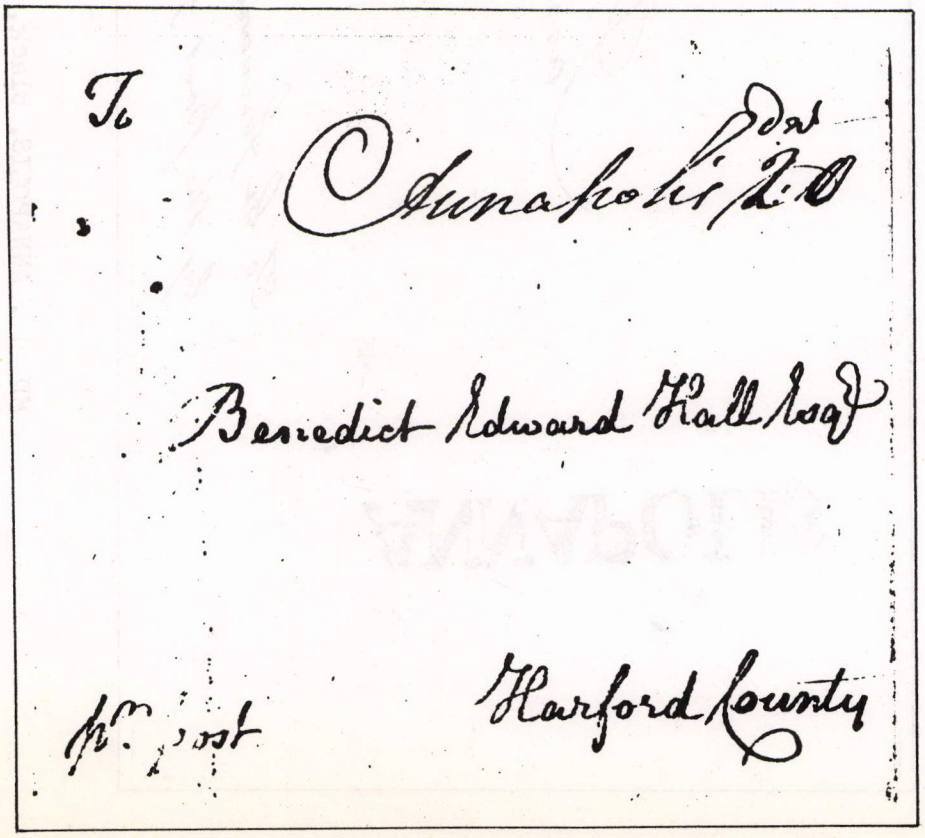


MD 1 . ANNAPOLIS, black, 59½ x 9, on reverse, from London, March 11, 1769, to Philadelphia. Double letter, 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

MARYLAND

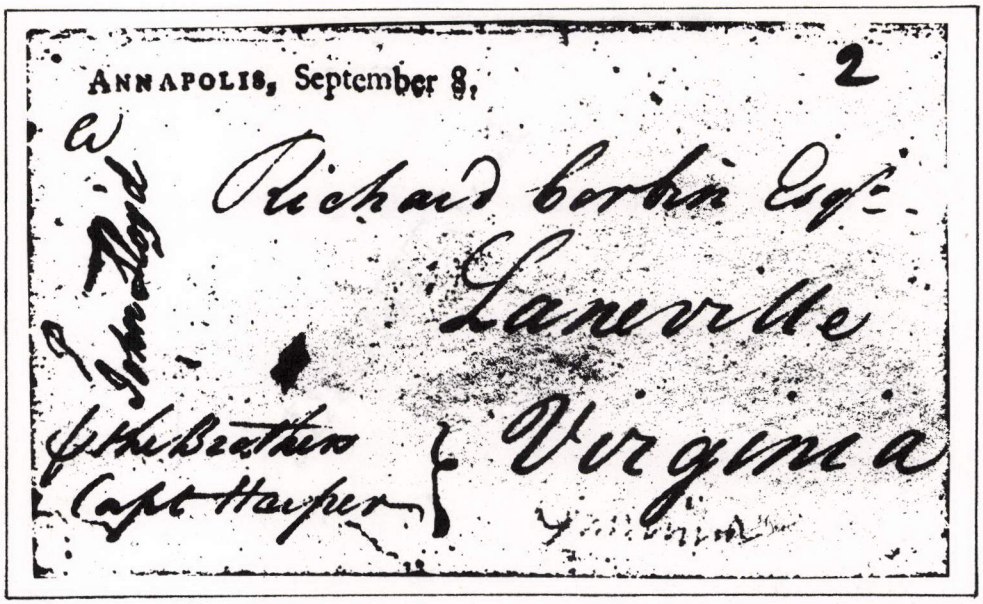


MD 2. Annapolis, from London, April 10, 1776, to Yorktown, Va. 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Colonial Williamsburg).

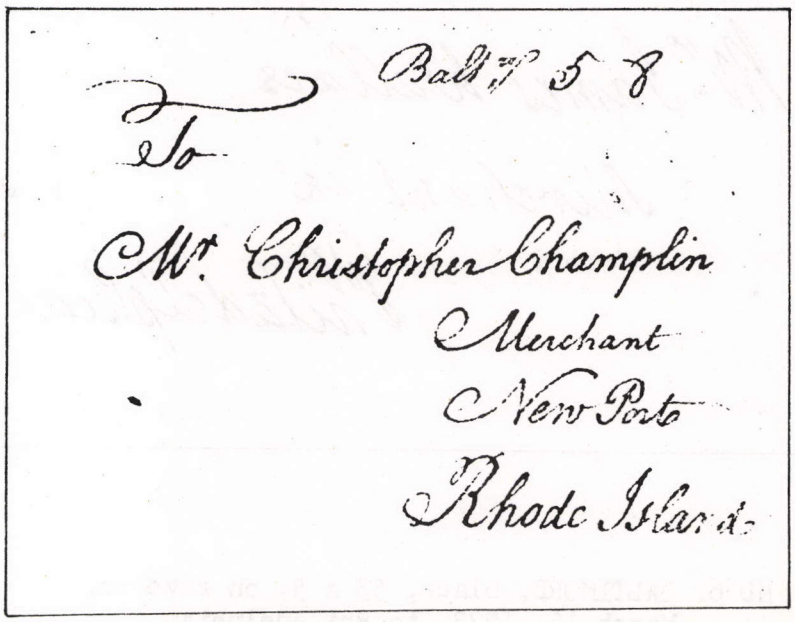


MD 3. Annapolis, 1776, to Harford County, Md. 2 dwts. (Maryland Historical Society).

MARYLAND

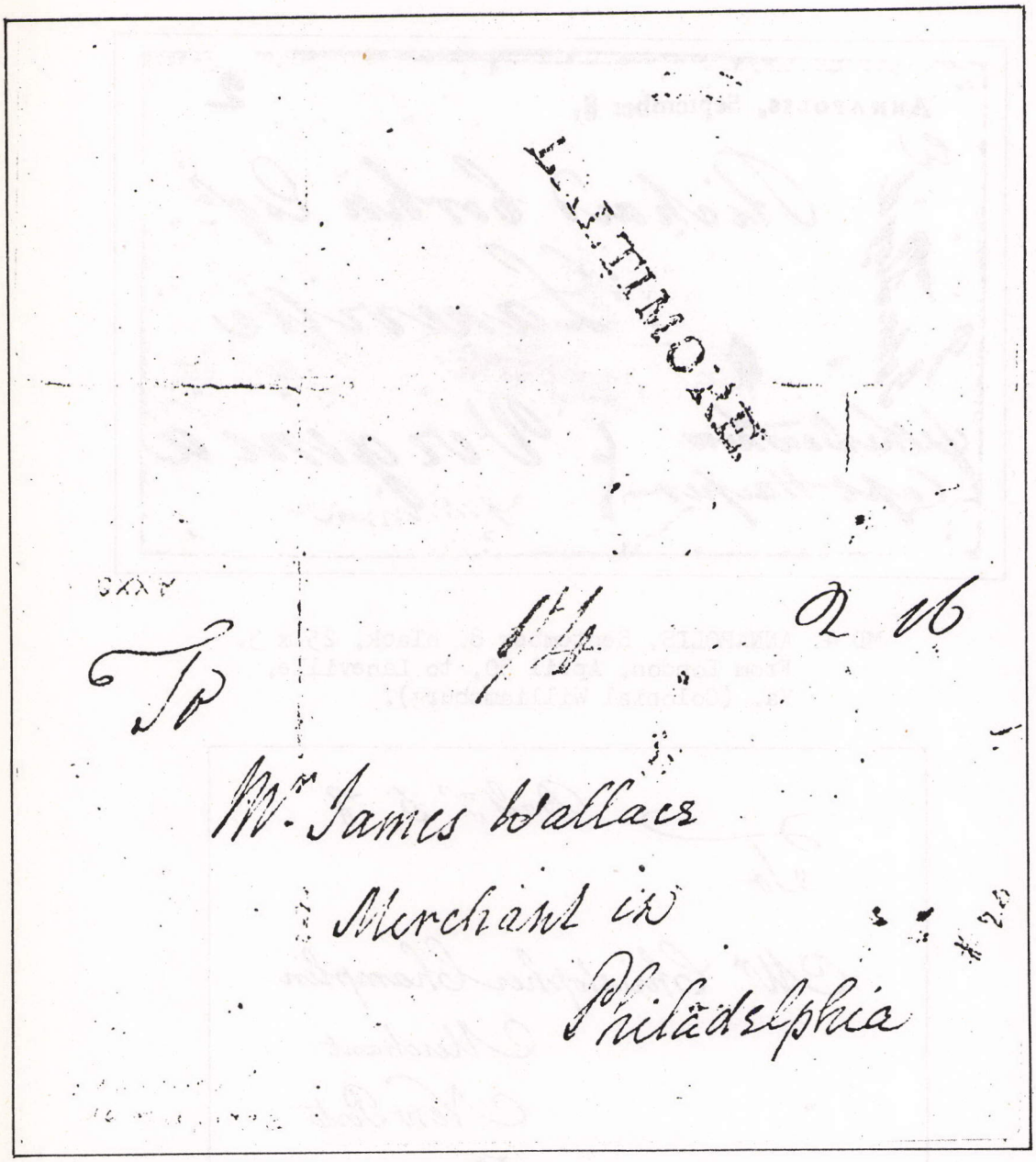


MD 4. ANNAPOLIS, September 8. black, 25 x 3. From London, April 30, to Laneville, Va. (Colonial Williamsburg).

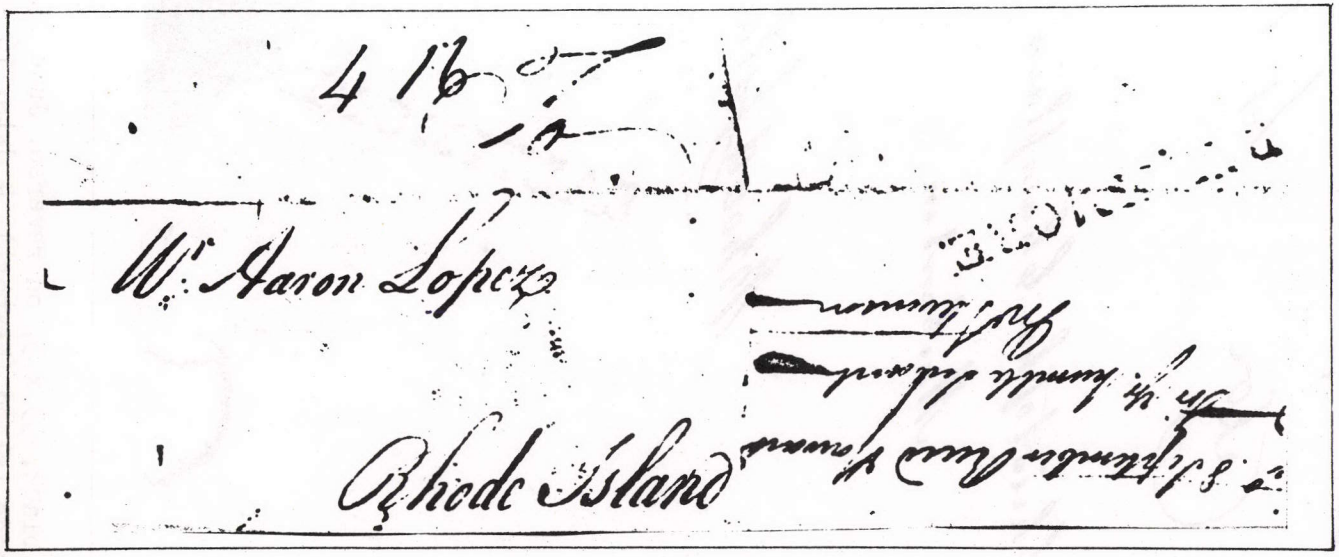


MD 5. Balt(imore), May 12, 1766, to Newport. 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

MARYLAND

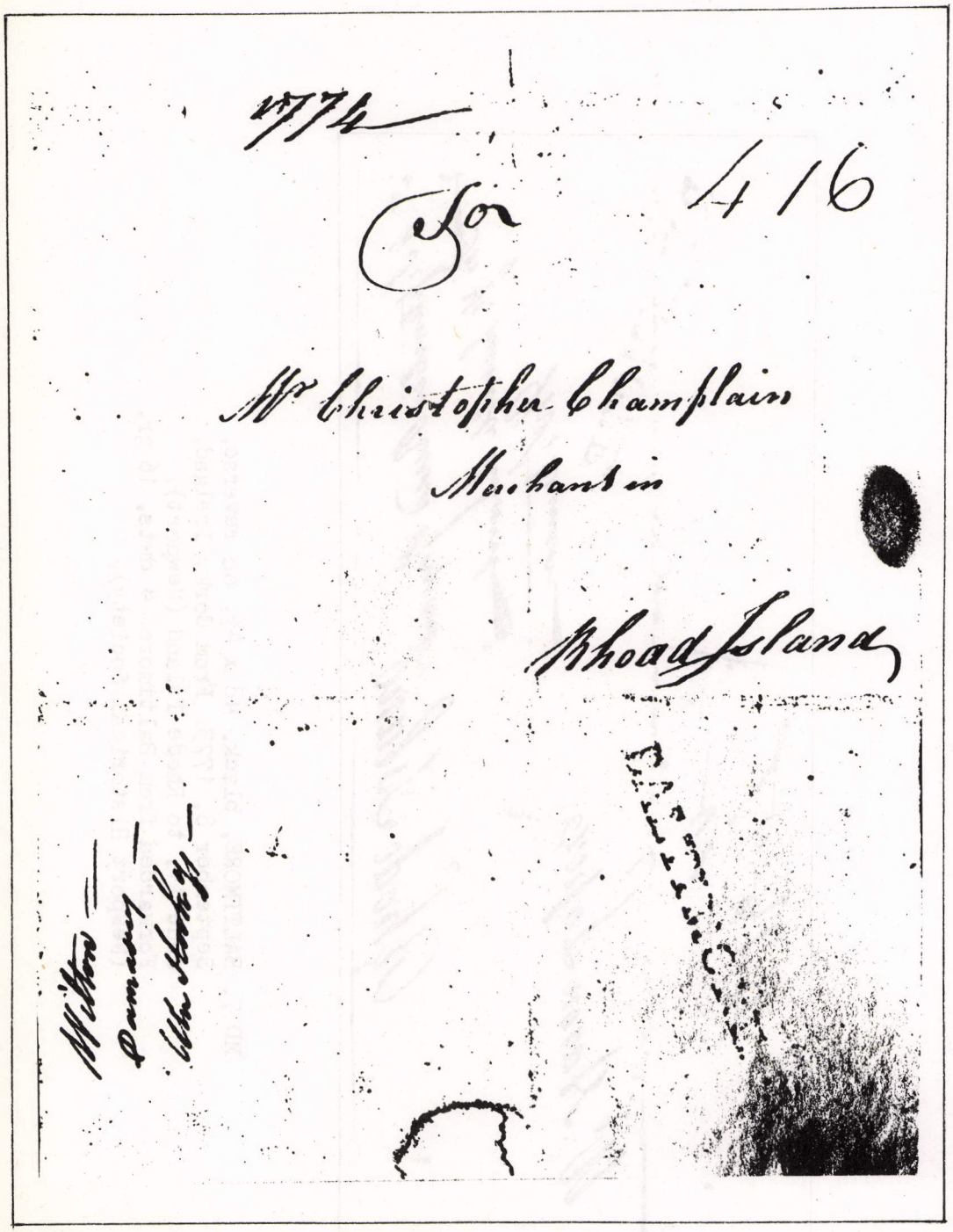


MD 6. BALTIMORE, black, 53 x 5, on reverse.
March 16, 1772, to Philadelphia.
2 dwts, 16 gr. (J.H.Smith, Providence).

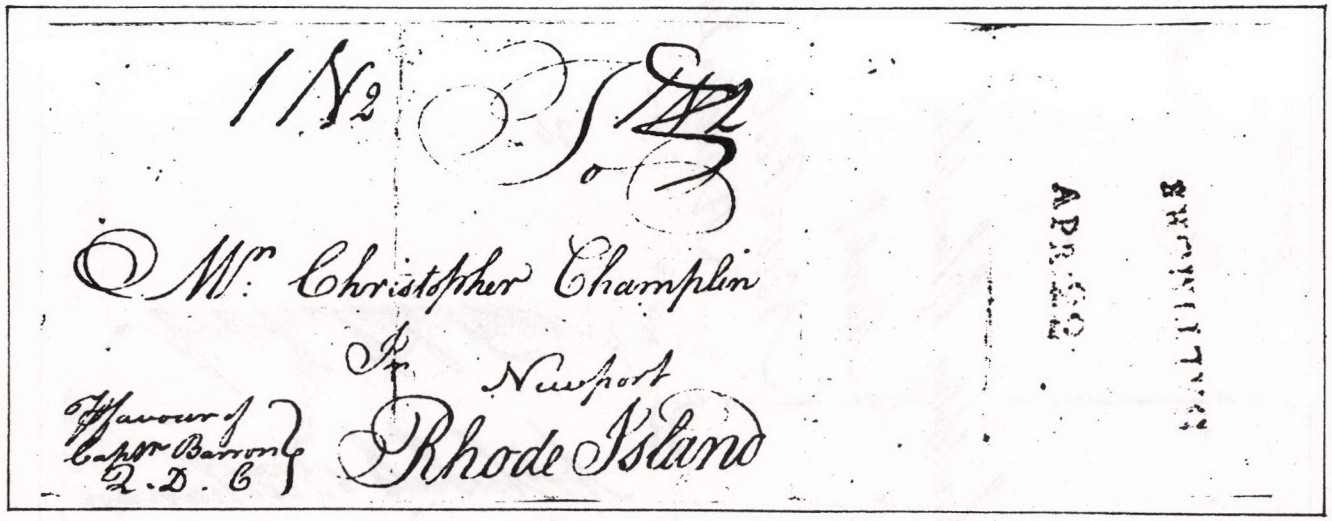


MD 7. BALTIMORE, black, 48 x 4½, on reverse, September 8, 1773. From Cork, Ireland, June 11, to Rhode Island (Newport). Forwarded from Baltimore. 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Newport Historical Society).

MARYLAND

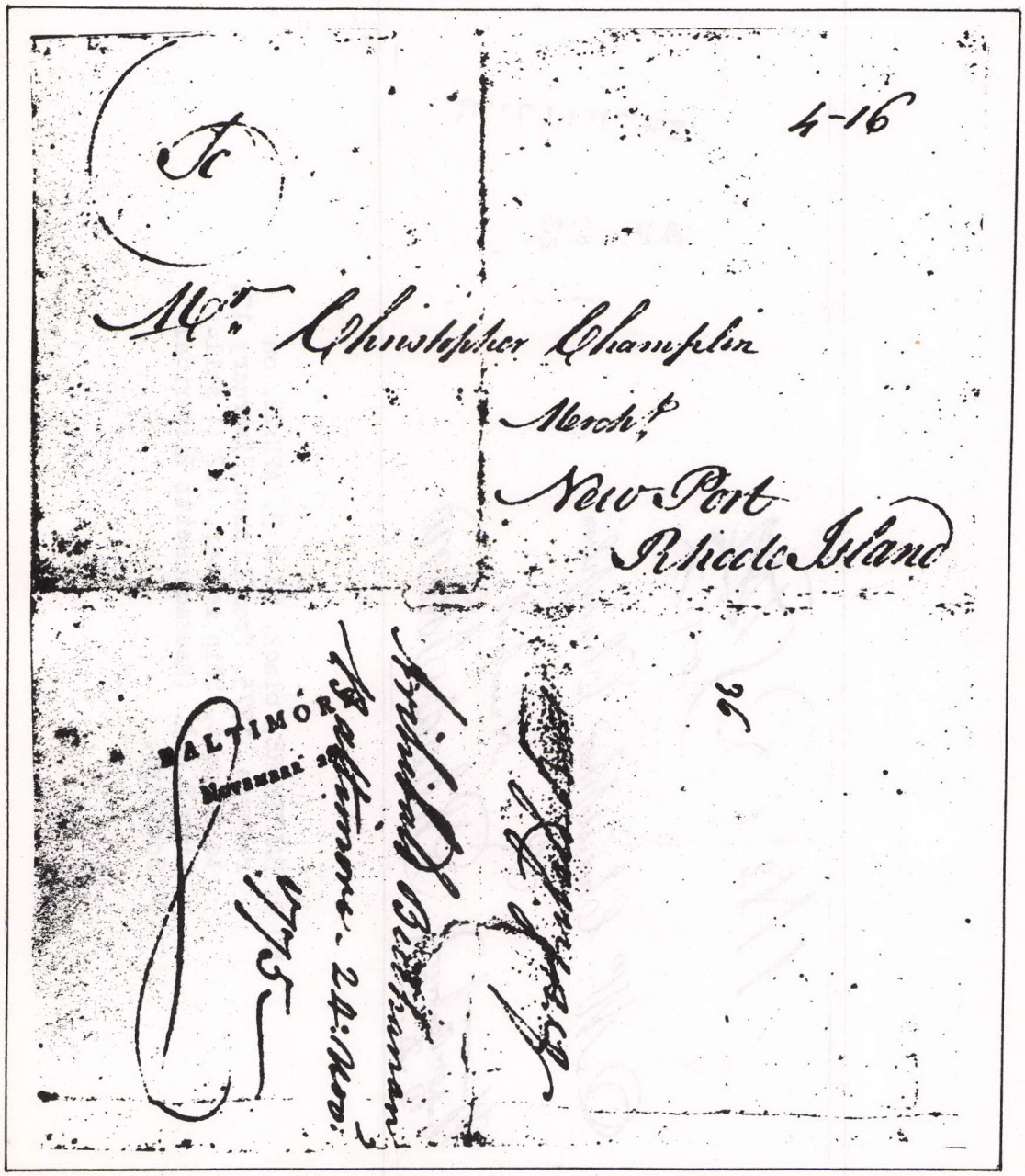


MD 8. BALTIMORE, black, 53 x 5, on reverse. June 15, 1774, to Rhode Island (Newport), 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence).



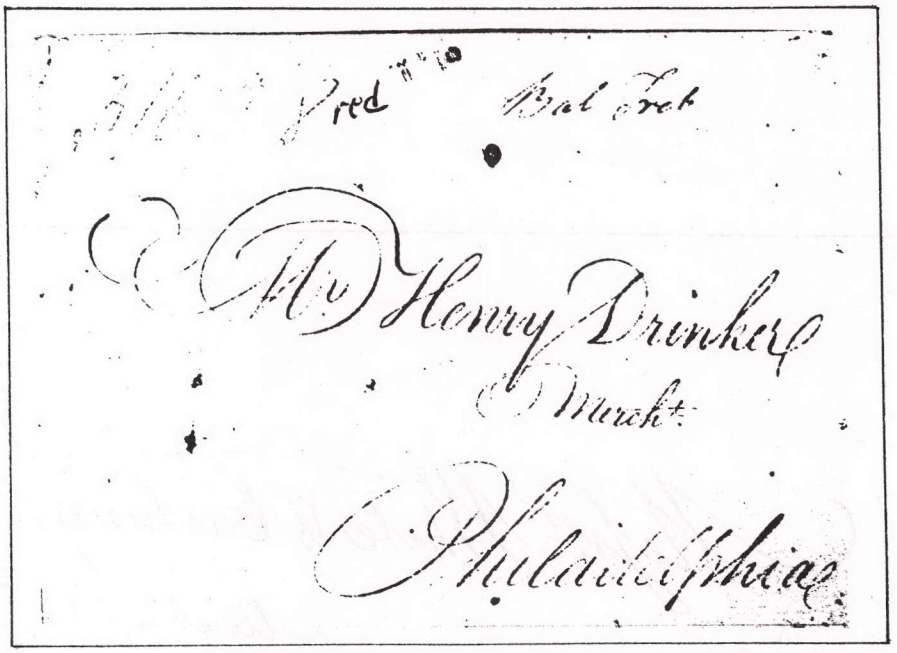
MD 9. BALTIMORE, black, 33 x 3, APR:22, on reverse, 1775. From Lisbon, February 17, to Newport. Ship letter, 1N2 (1 shilling 2 d.). (Massachusetts Historical Society).

MARYLAND

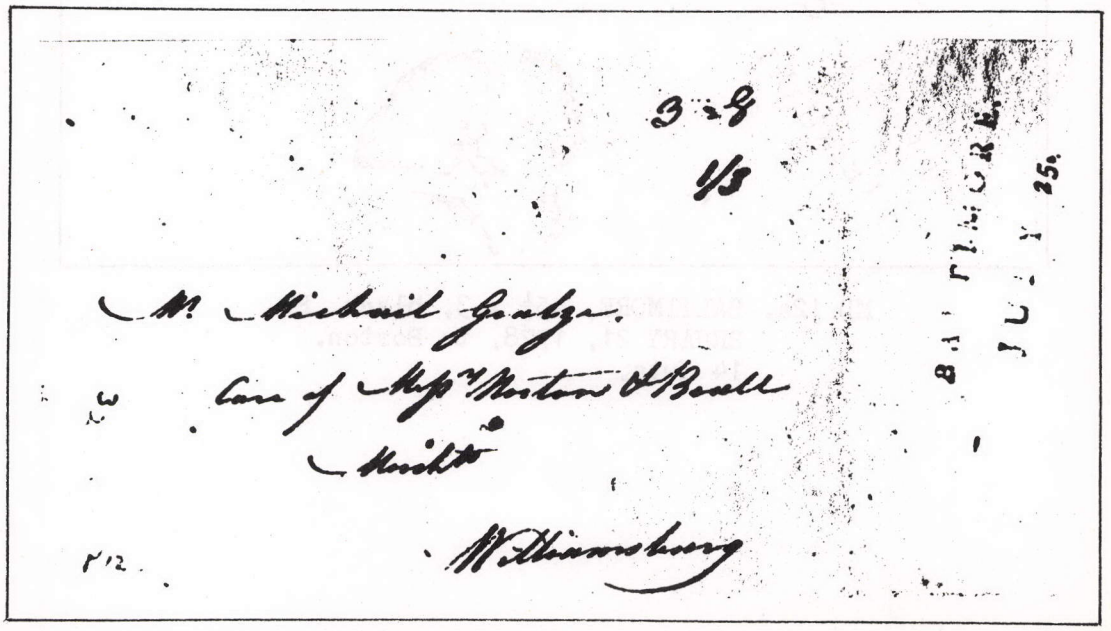


MD 10. BALTIMORE, black, 31 x 2, NOVEMBER 28, on reverse, 1775. To Newport. 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

MARYLAND

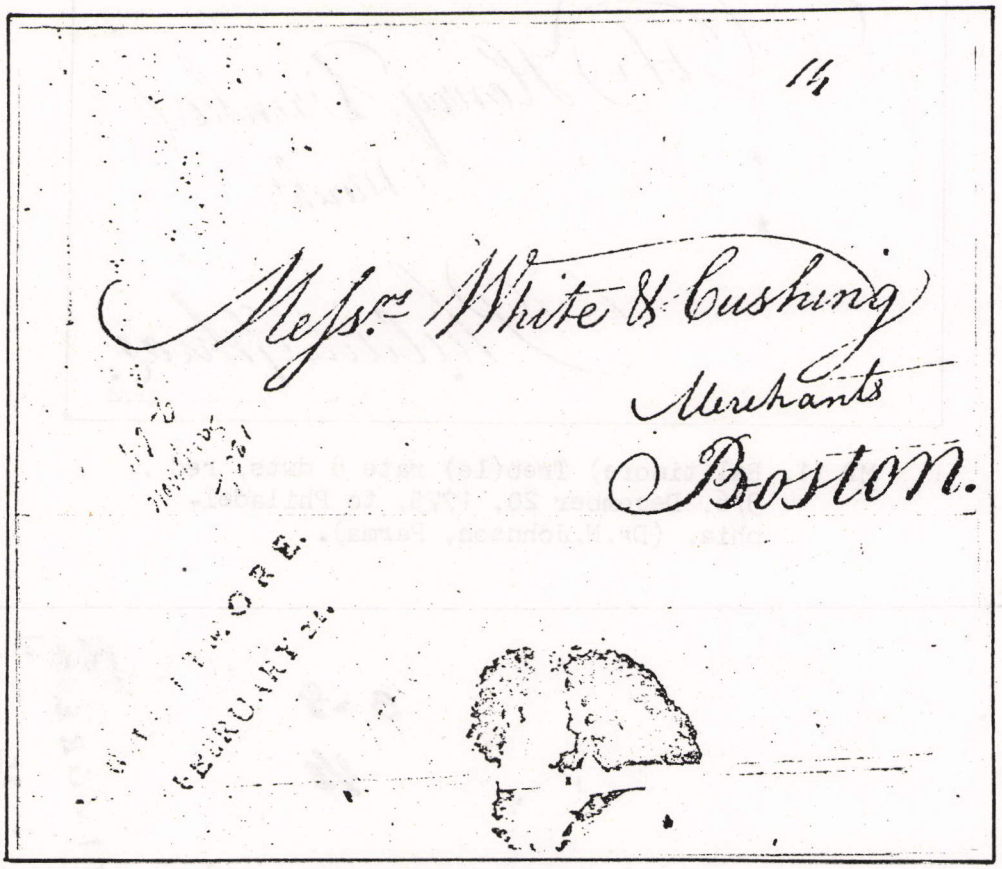


MD 11. Bal(timore) Treb(le) rate 8 dwts, red . 3/6. December 20, 1775, to Philadelphia. (Dr.N.Johnson, Parma).



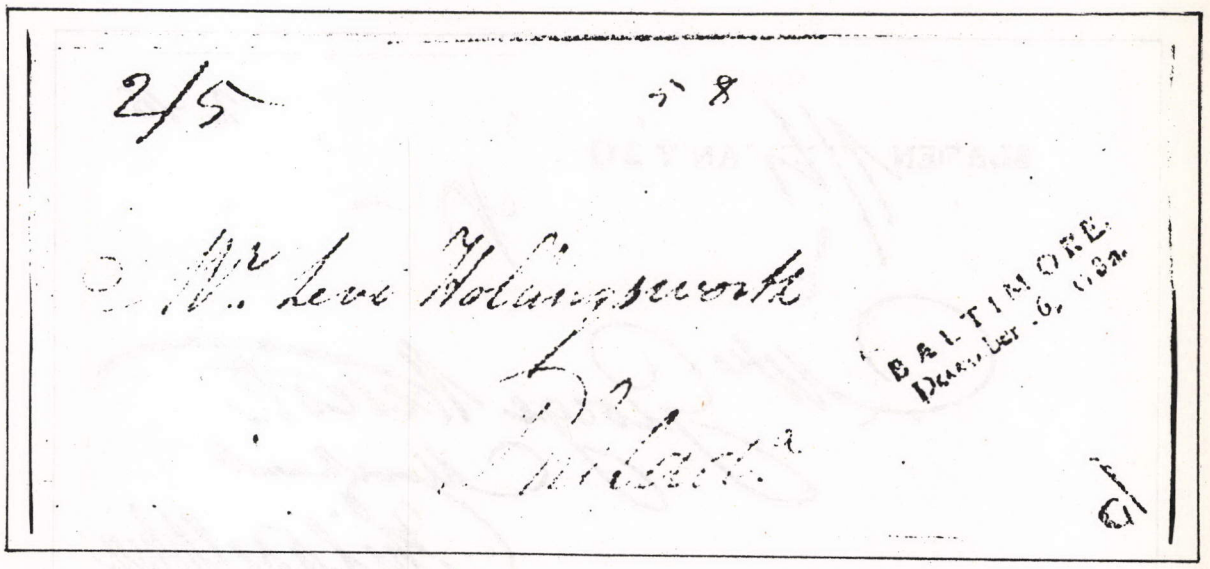
MD 12. BALTIMORE, black, 39 x 3, JULY 25, on reverse, 1777 ? To Williamsburg. 3 dwts, 8 gr. 1/3 local currency. (Rev.D.Homer Kendall, Oberlin).

MARYLAND

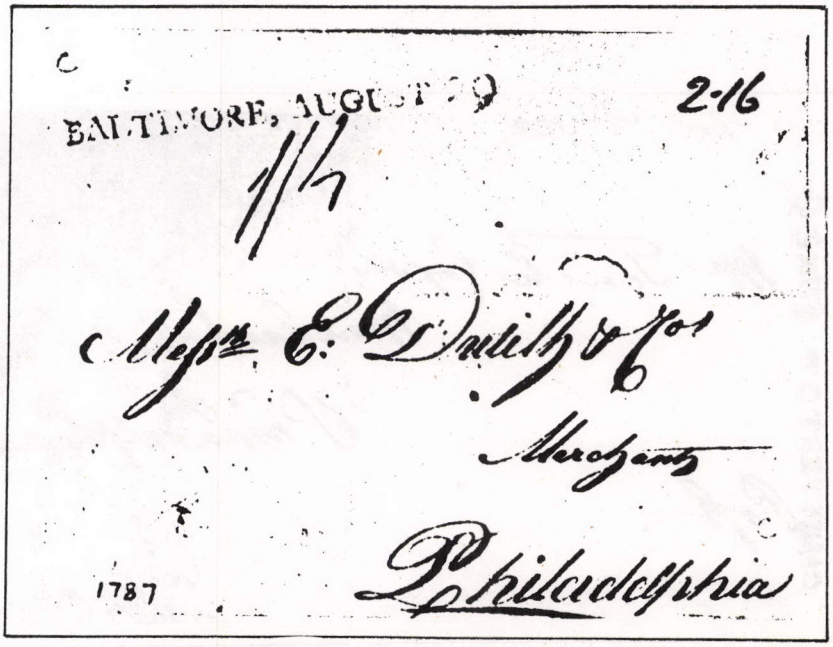


MD 12a. BALTIMORE, 45½ x 3, black. FEBRUARY 21, 1778, to Boston. 14 dwts.

MARYLAND

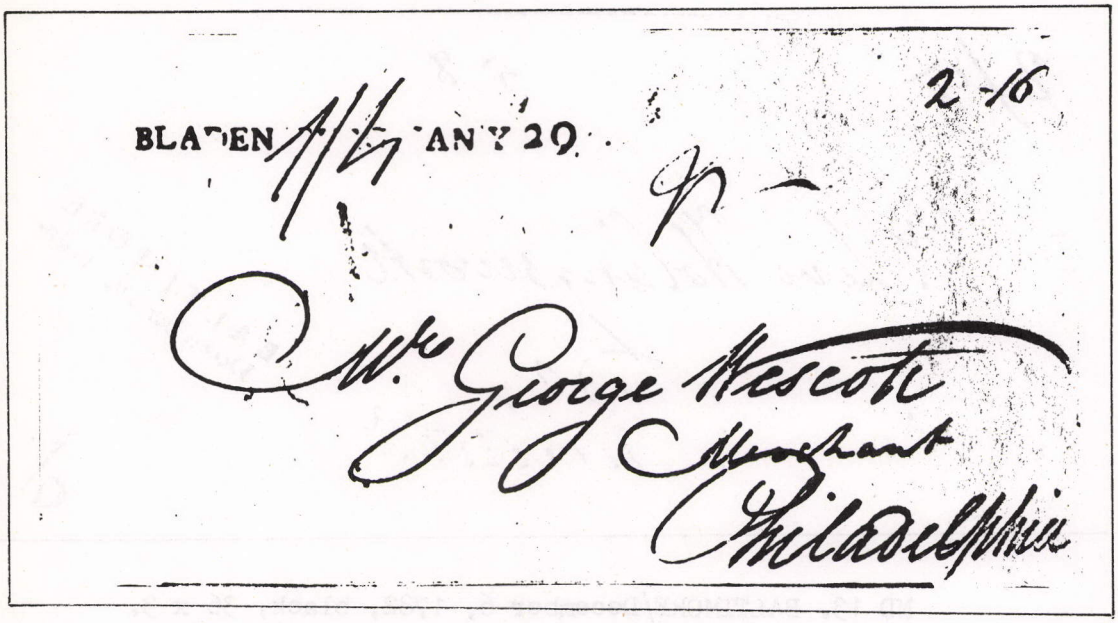


MD 13. BALTIMORE/December 6, 1782, black, 36 x 3.
To Philadelphia. Double rate 5 dwts, 8 gr.
2/5 local currency. (Siegel auction).

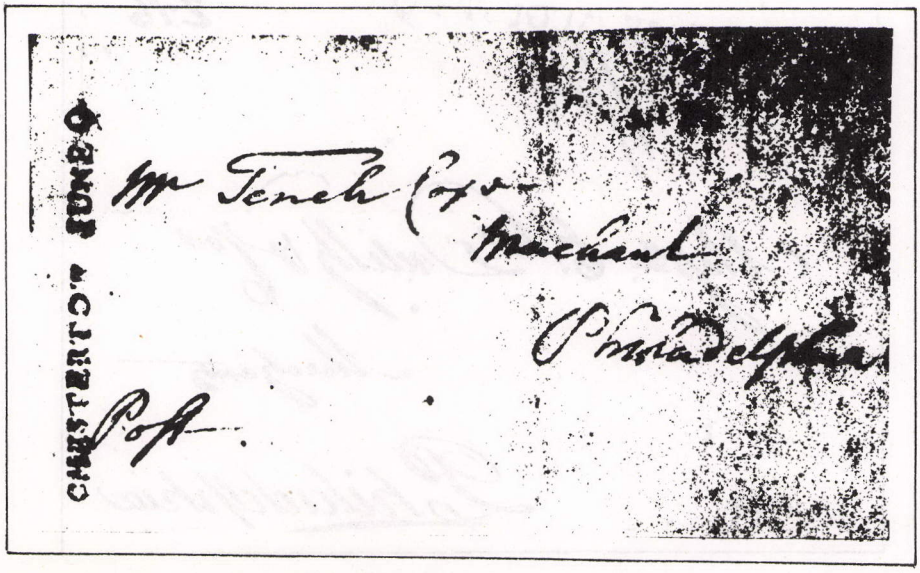


MD 14. BALTIMORE, AUGUST 29, black, 29 x 3,
1787, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts, 16 gr.
1/4 local currency. (C.F.Meroni).

MARYLAND

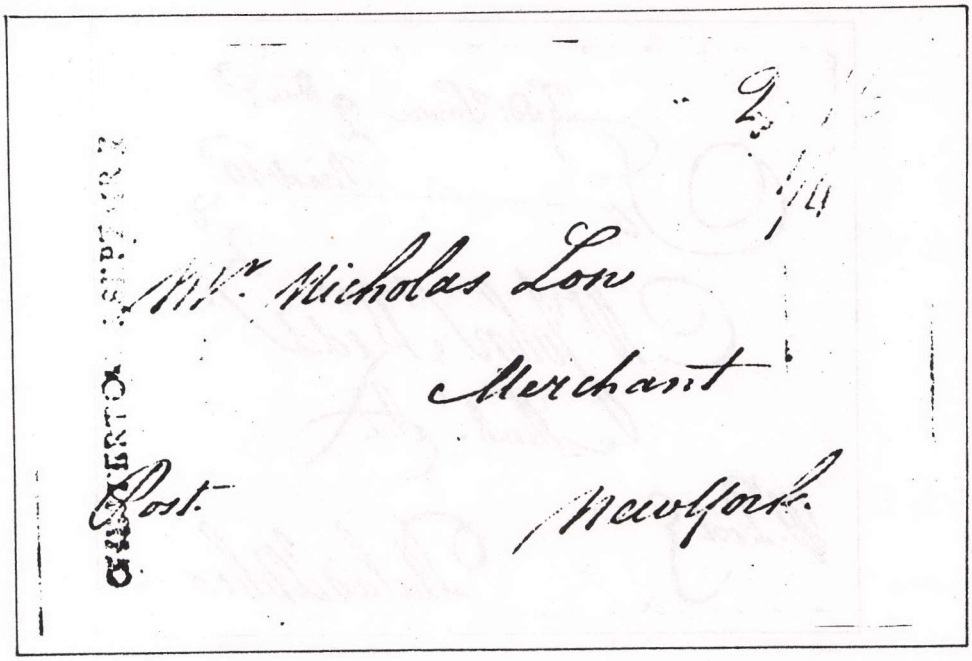


MD 15. BLADENBURG JAN(uar)Y 29, 35 x 3½, 1787, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts, 16 gr. 1/4 local currency. (Rev.D.Homer Kendall, Oberlin).

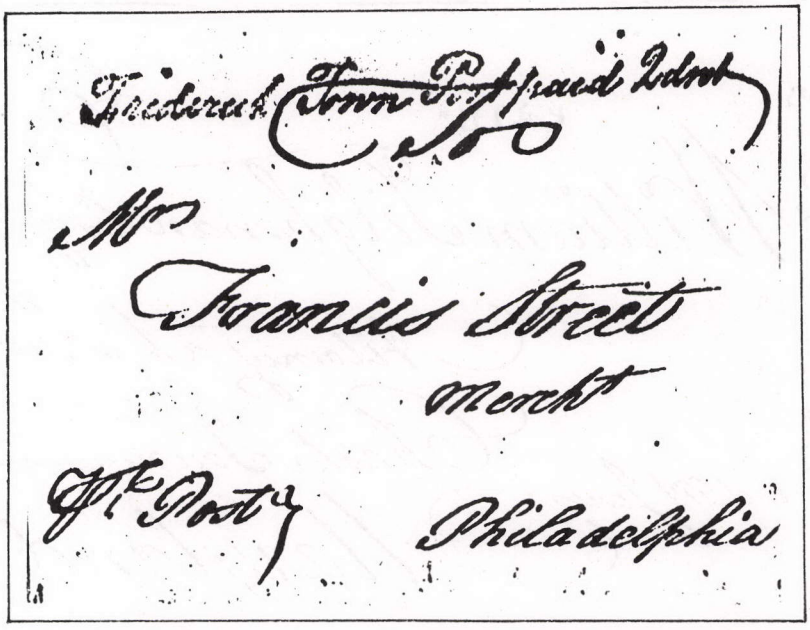


MD 16. CHESTERTOW(N) JUNE 9, black, 32 x 2½, 1788, to Philadelphia. PAID 1 dwt, 8 gr. (C.D.McFadden, Westbrook, Me).

MARYLAND

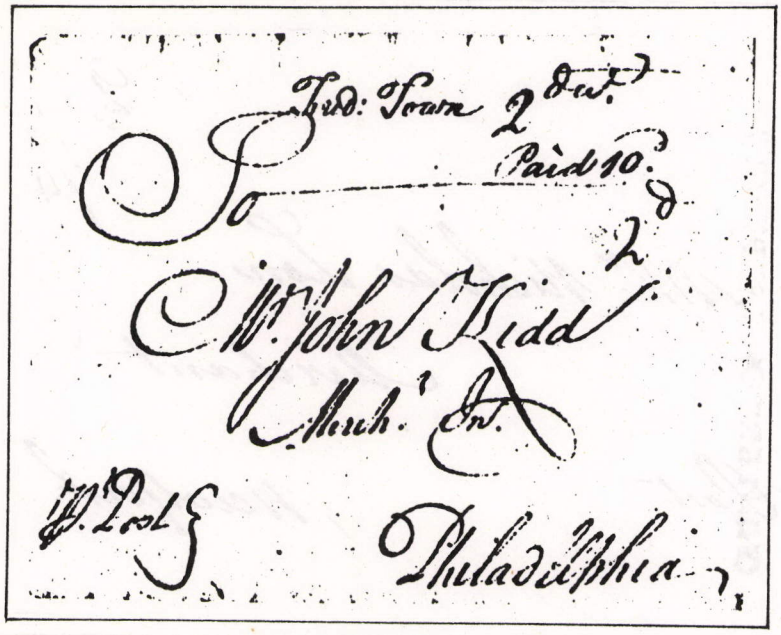


MD 17. CHESTERTOWN,SEPT(E)M(BE)R, 1, black, 38 x 2½, 1788. To New York. 2 dwts, 16 gr. 1/4 local currency. (Rev. D.Homer Kendall, Oberlin).

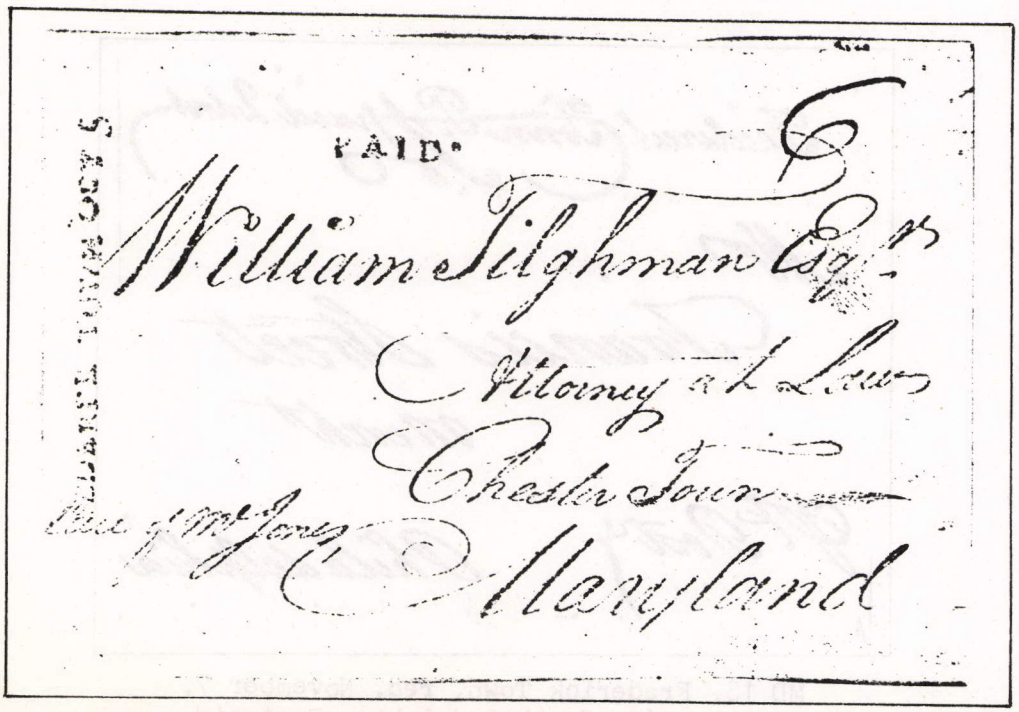


MD 18. Frederick Town, red, November 7, 1765. To Philadelphia. Postpaid 2 dwts. (Siegel auction).

MARYLAND

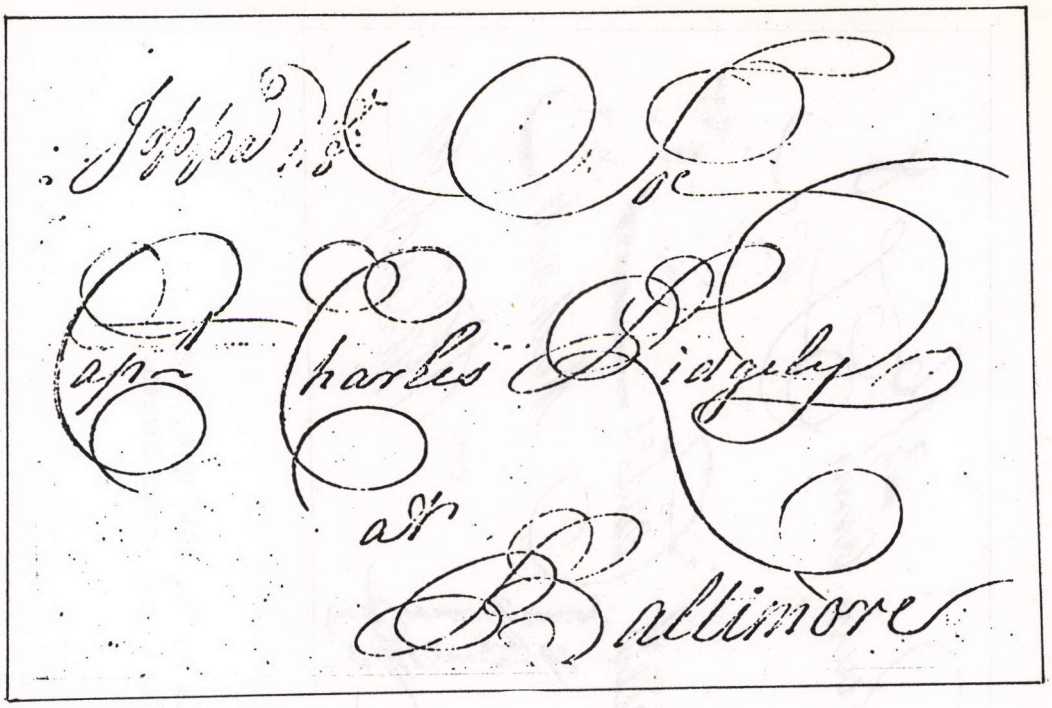


MD 19. Fred(erick) Town. 1775, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts. Paid 10d (local currency). (Siegel auction).

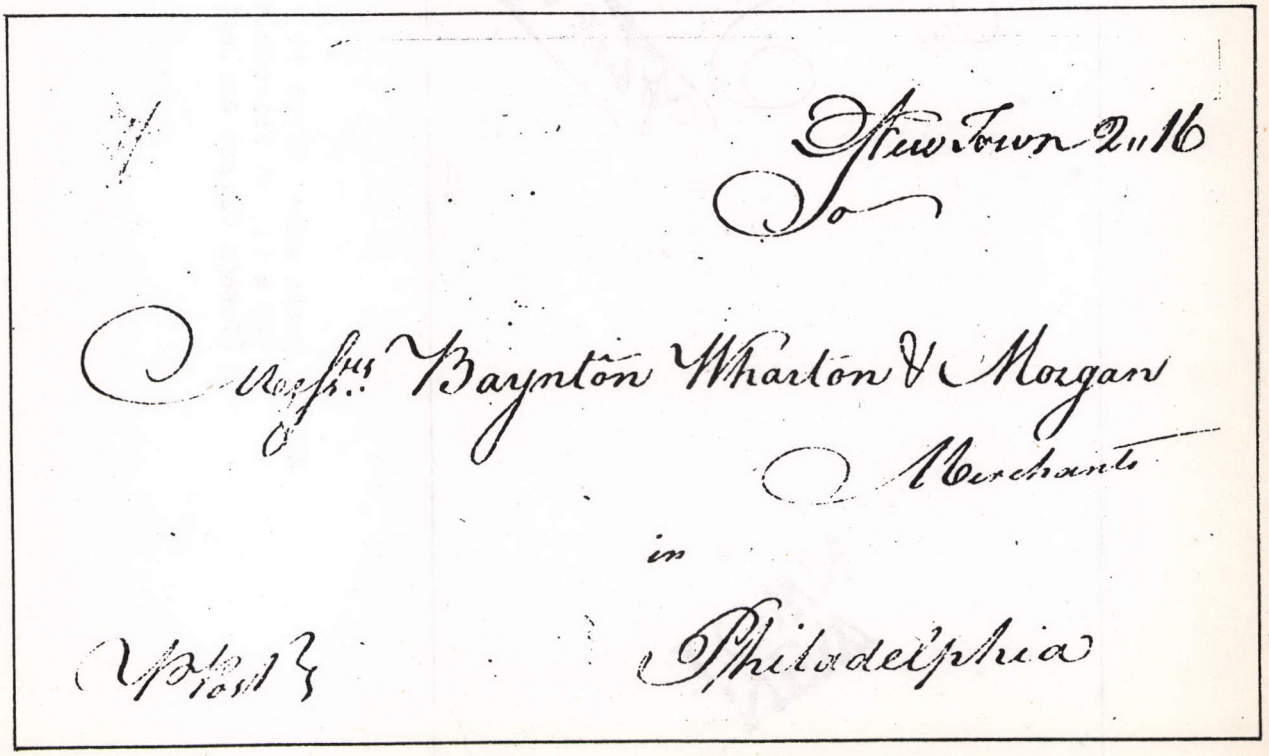


MD 20. FREDERIK TOWN OCT 5, black, 42 x 3½. 1787, from Philadelphia, October 3. To Chestertown. PAID 6 dwts. (Duke University Library).

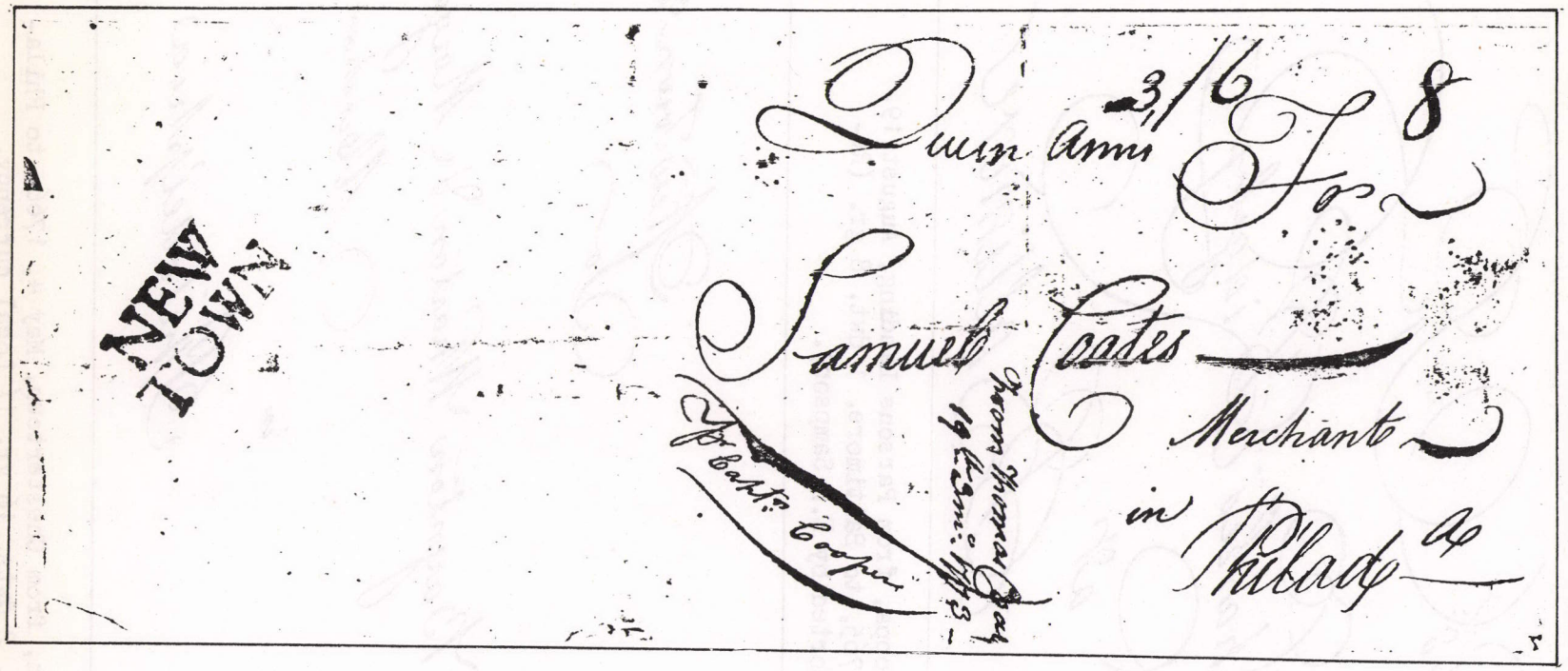
MARYLAND



MD 21. Joppa, from Parsons Landing, August 19, 1765, to Baltimore. 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

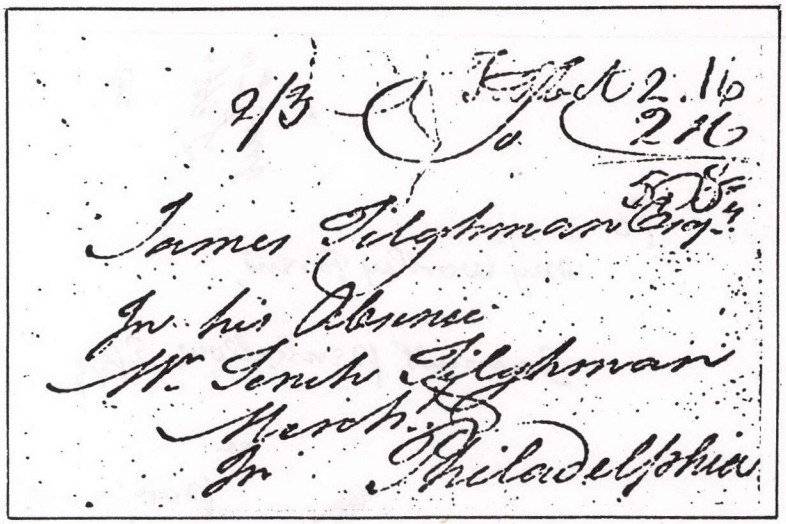


MD 22. New Town, from Chestertown, May 4, 1766. to Philadelphia. 2 dwts, 16 gr. 1/ Local currency. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

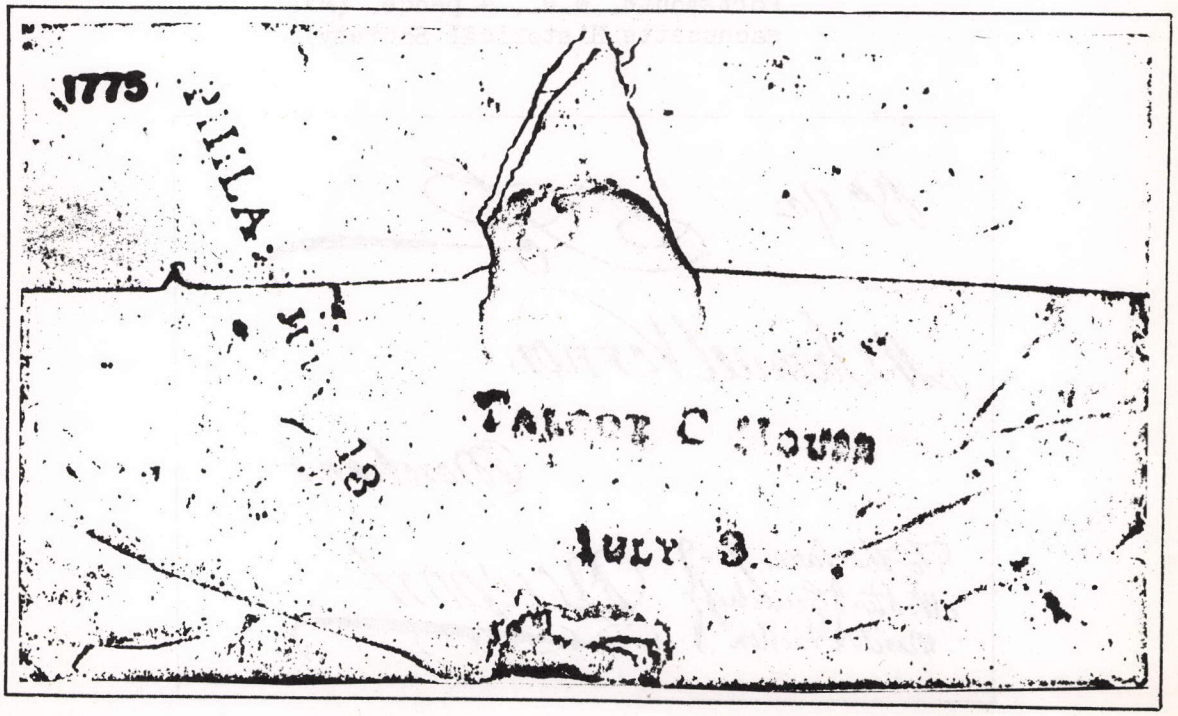


MD 23. Queen Anne, March 19, 1773, via MD 24. NEW/TOWN, red, 27½ x 15, to Philadelphia. 8 dwts. 3/6 local currency. (Joseph Carson collection).

MARYLAND

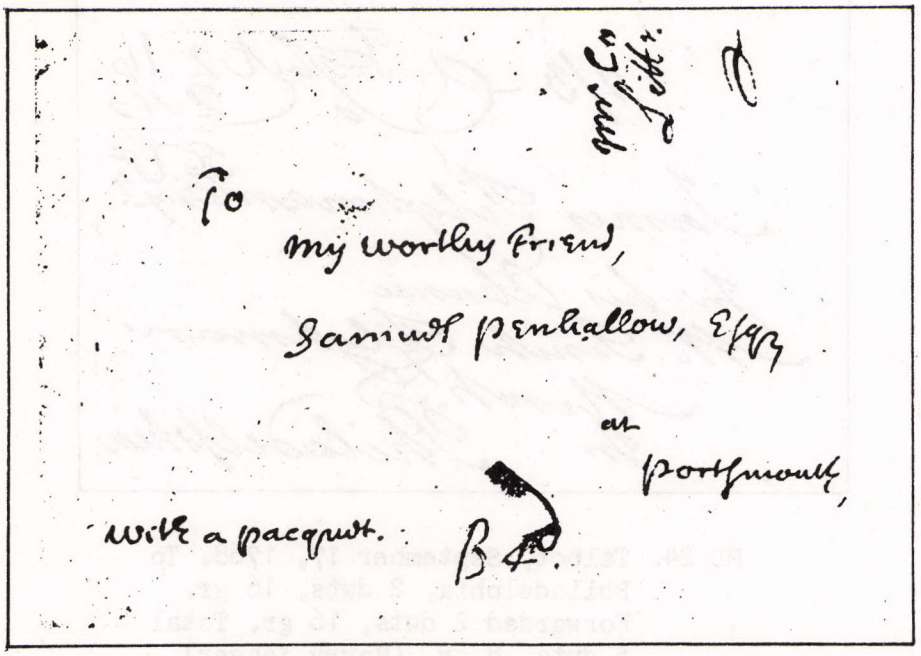


MD 24. Talbot, September 17, 1768. To Philadelphia, 2 dwts, 16 gr. Forwarded 2 dwts, 16 gr. Total 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Harry Yeager).

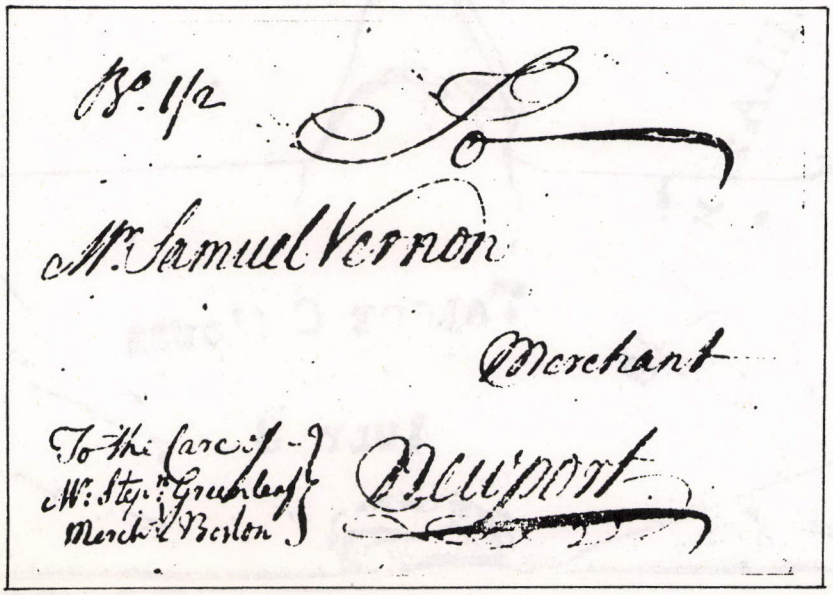


MD 25. TALBOT C HOUSE, black, 56 x 4½, JULY 3, 1775, to PHILA(DELPHIA):, red, 21 x 4½, JULY 13, all on reverse. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

MASSACHUSETTS

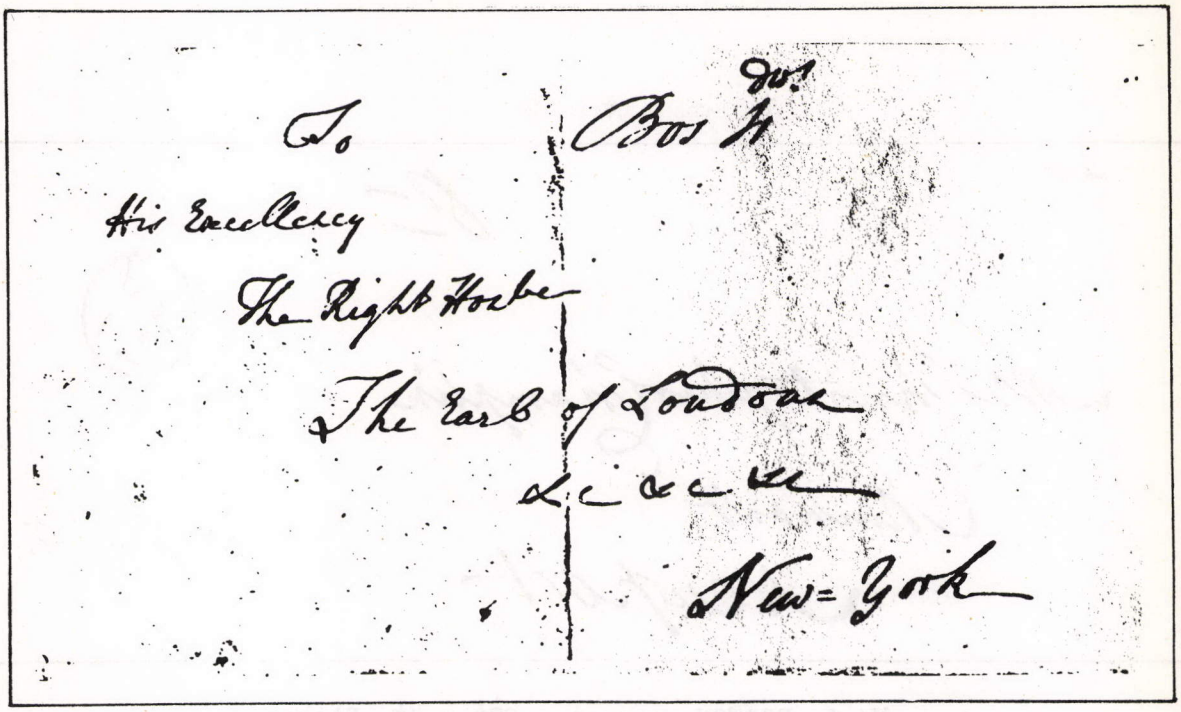


MA 1. B(oston), December 4, 1704, to Portsmouth, N.H., 4 pence. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

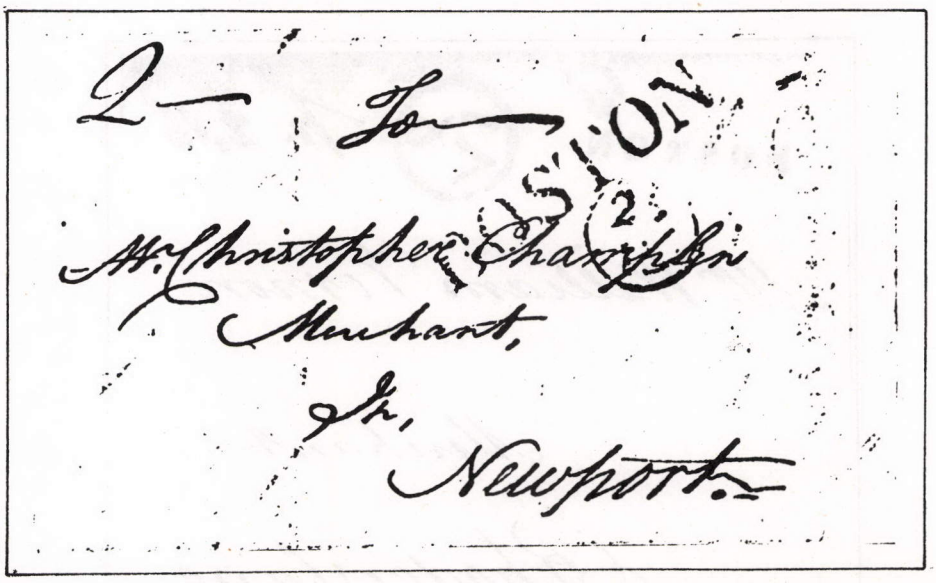


MA 2. B°(ston), September 24, 1745, to Newport. 1 shilling, 2d. (D.L.Jarrett).

MASSACHUSETTS

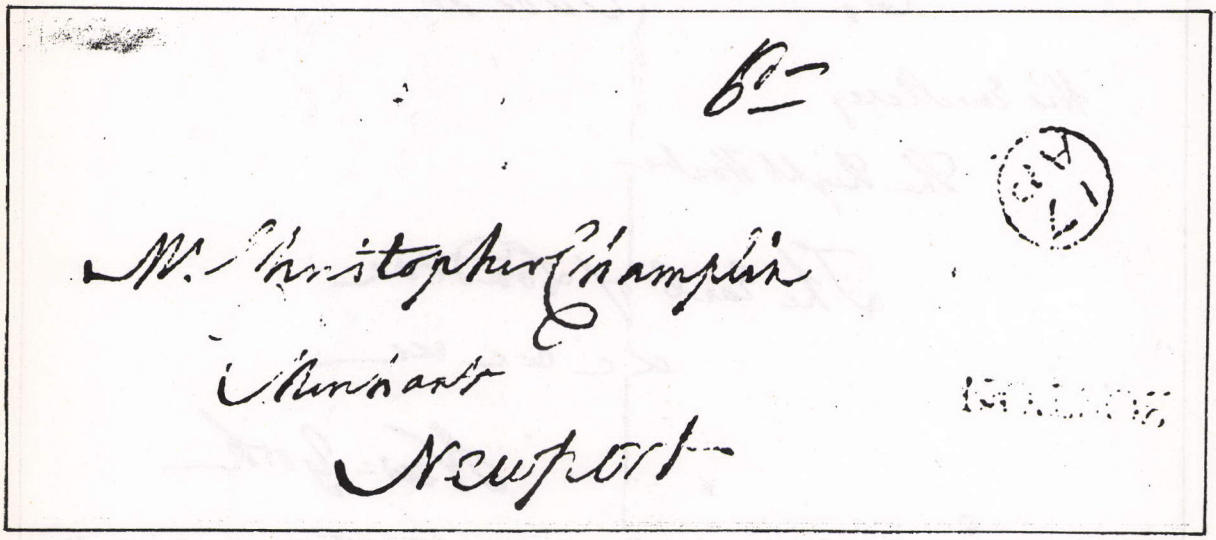


MA 3. Bos(ton), April 17, 1758, to New York, 4 dwts. Huntington Library, San Marino. HM 5810).

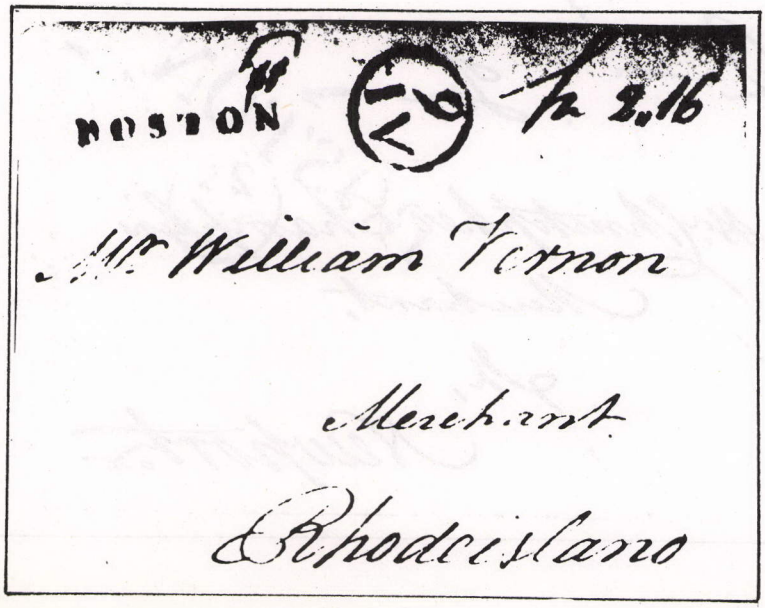


MA 4. BOSTON, red, 43½ x 7½. Bishop mark 25/IY (July), 1774. To Newport, 2 dwts. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS

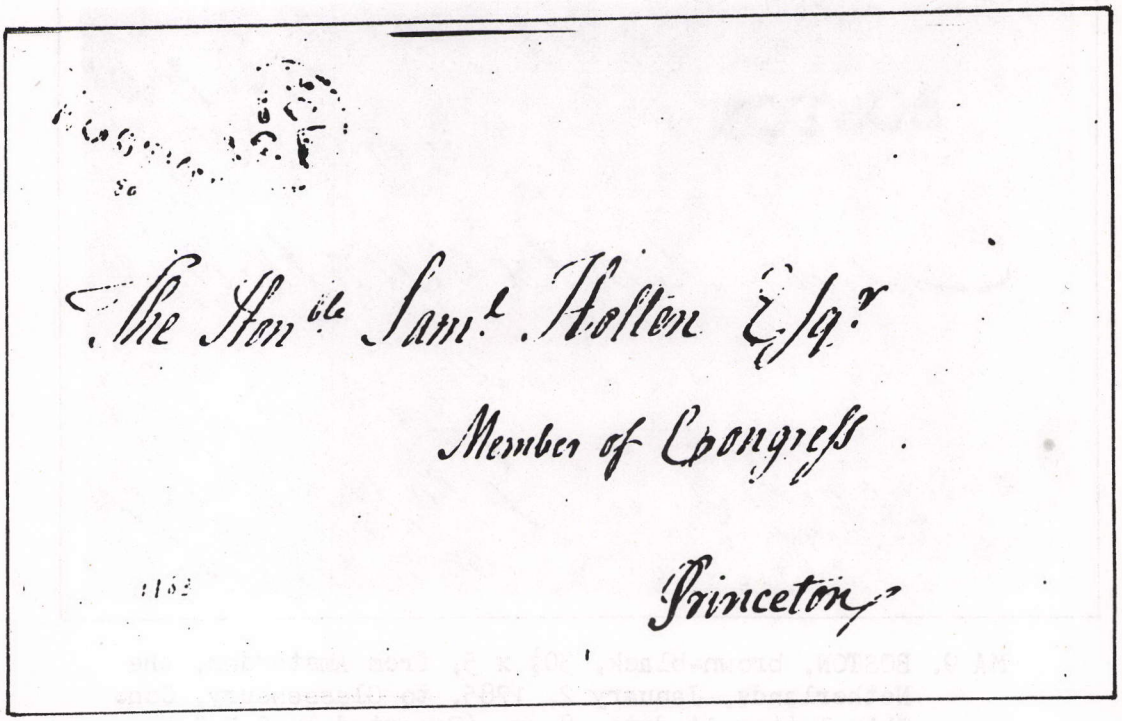


MA 5. BOSTON, magenta, 27½ x 4½, Bishop mark 17/AP(ril) all on reverse, 1775. British occupation. To Newport. 6 d. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

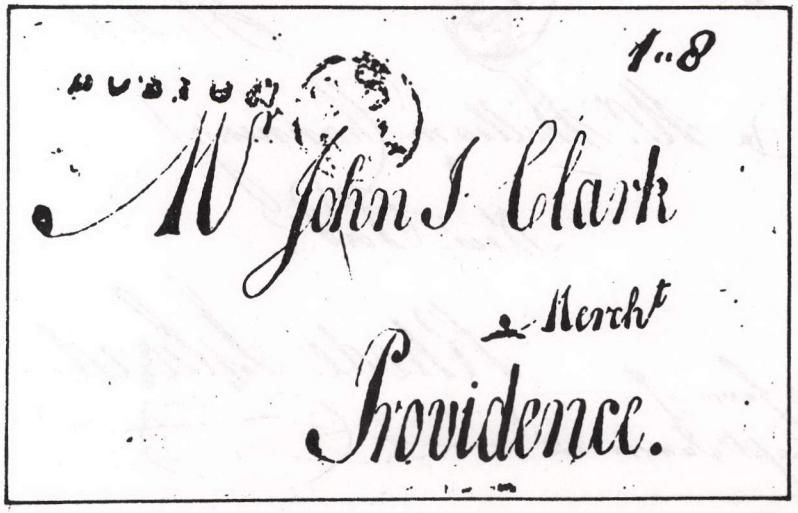


MA 6. BOSTON, olive, 26½ x 3. Bishop mark 9/IV(une), 1783. From London to Rhode Island. Ship letter 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS

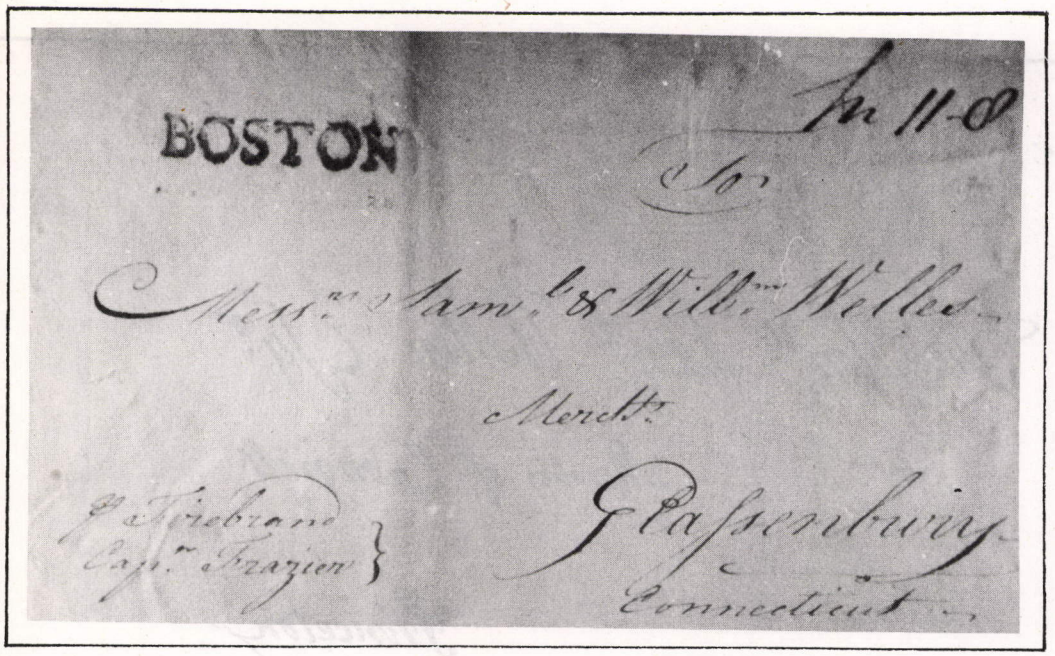


MA 7. BOSTON, olive, 25½ x 3½, Bishop mark 18/SE(ptember), 1783. To Princeton. (Clements Library, Ann Arbor).

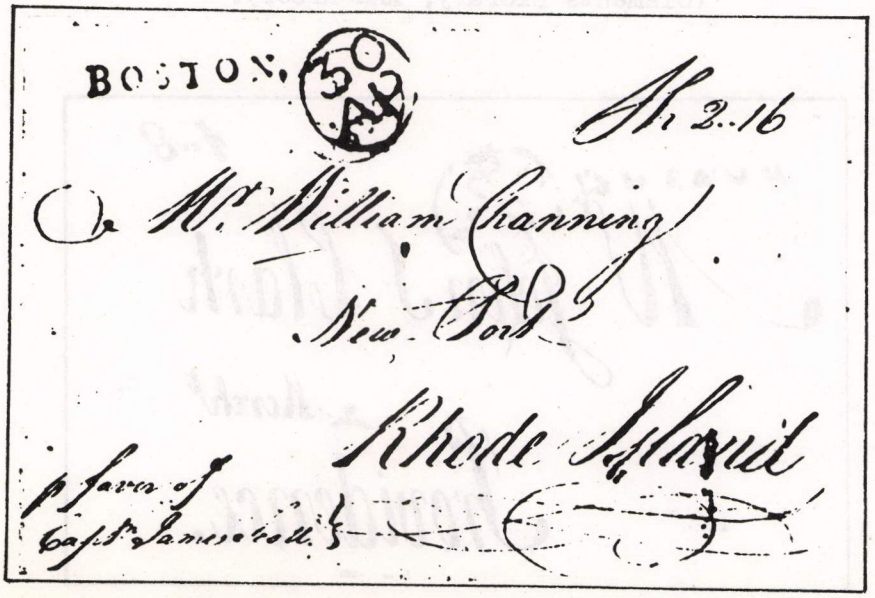


MA 8. BOSTON, red, 27 x 3, Bishop mark 28/MA(y), 1785, from Weston, Mass. May 11, to Providence. 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS

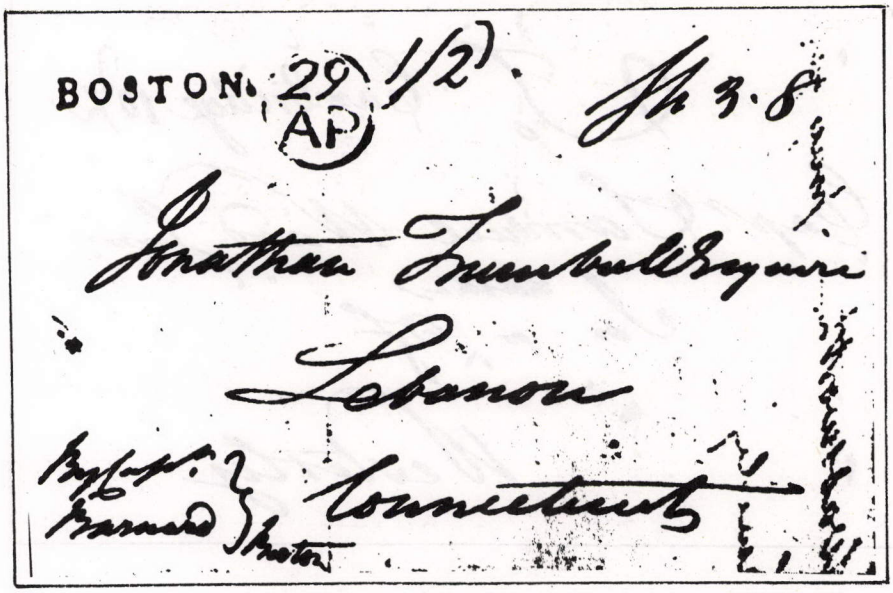


MA 9. BOSTON, brown-black, 30½ x 5, from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, January 2, 1785, to Glassenbury, Con. Ship letter 11 dwts, 8 gr. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

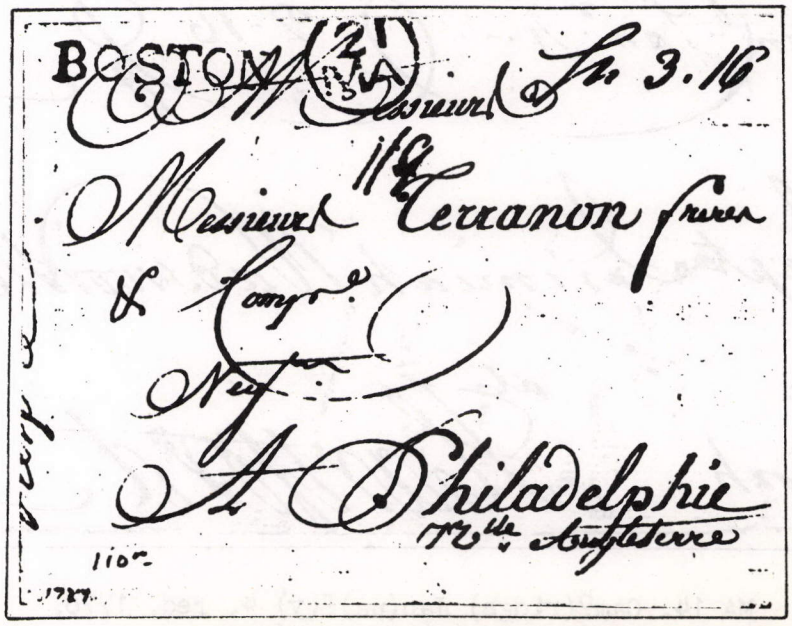


MA 10. BOSTON, black, 25½ x 2½, Bishop mark 30/AP(ril), from London, February 28, 1787, to Rhode Island (Newport). Ship letter, 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Soceity).

MASSACHUSETTS

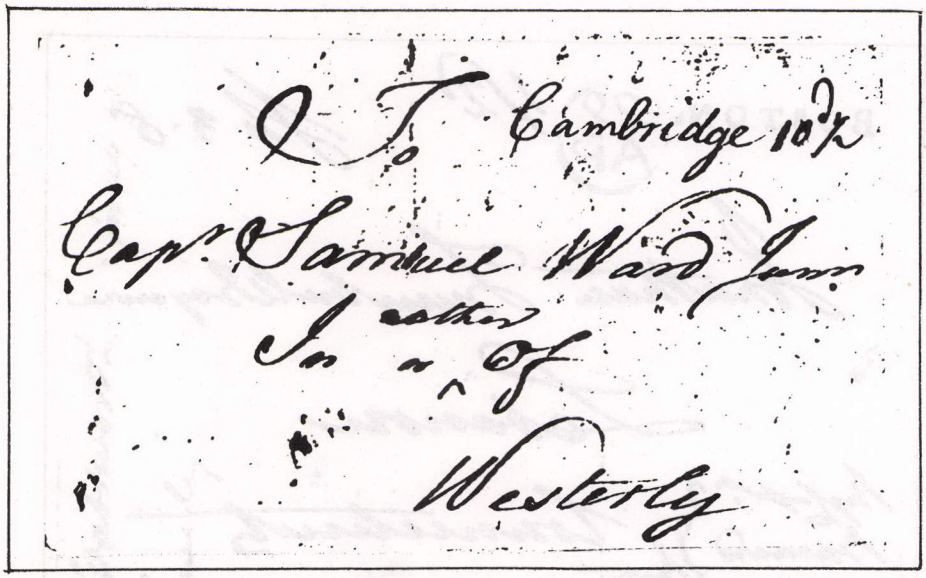


MA 11, BOSTON, black, 28½ x 3½, Bishop mark 29/AP(ril), from London, February 27, 1787, to Lebanon, Conn. Ship letter, 3 dwts, 8 gr. 1/2 local currency. (Yale University Library).

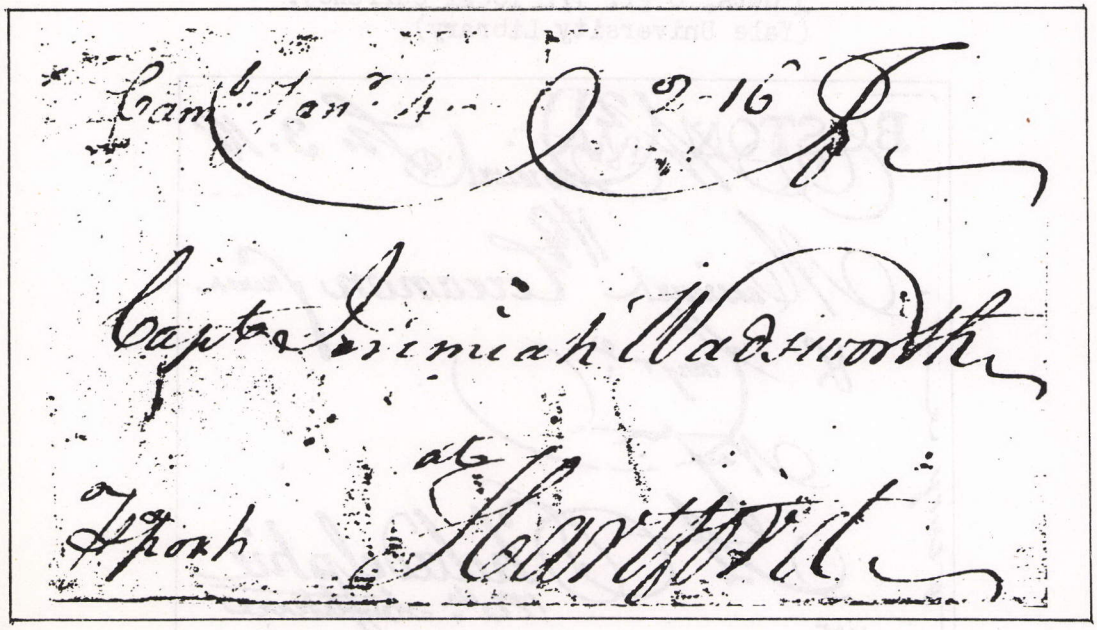


MA 12. BOSTON, black, 28 x 5. Bishop mark 21/MA(y), 1787. From France to Philadelphia. Ship letter, 3 dwts, 16 gr.

MASSACHUSETTS

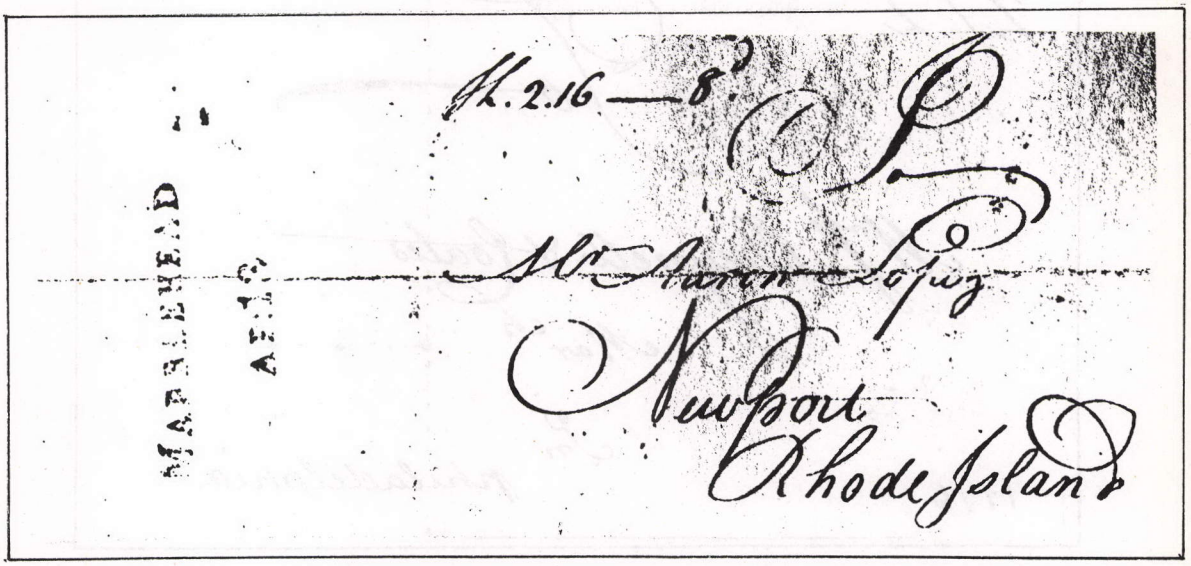


MA 13. Cambridge, May 26, 1775, to Westerly. 10½ pence. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

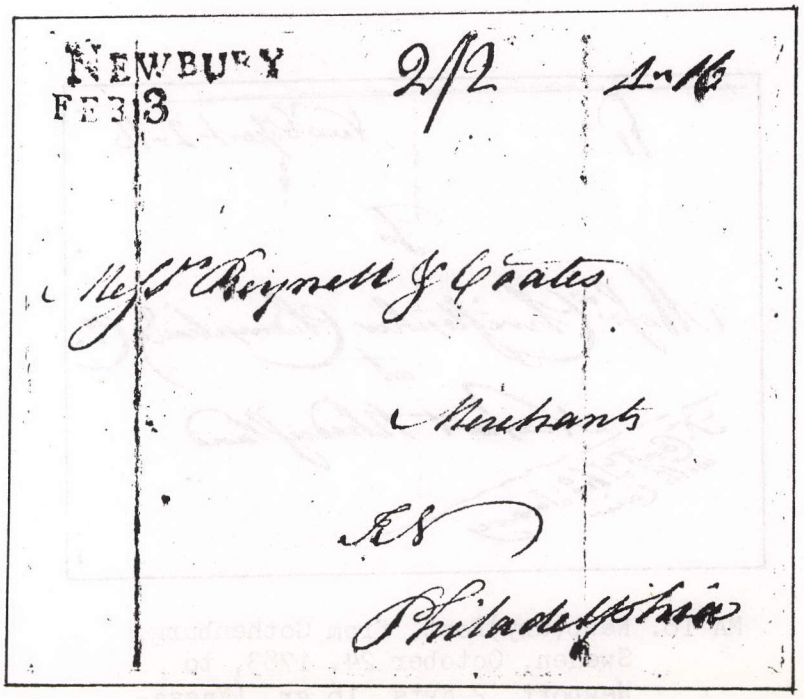


MA 14. Cam^{b}(ridge) Jan(ua)^{r}(y) 4, red, 1776, to Hartford, 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Connecticut Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS

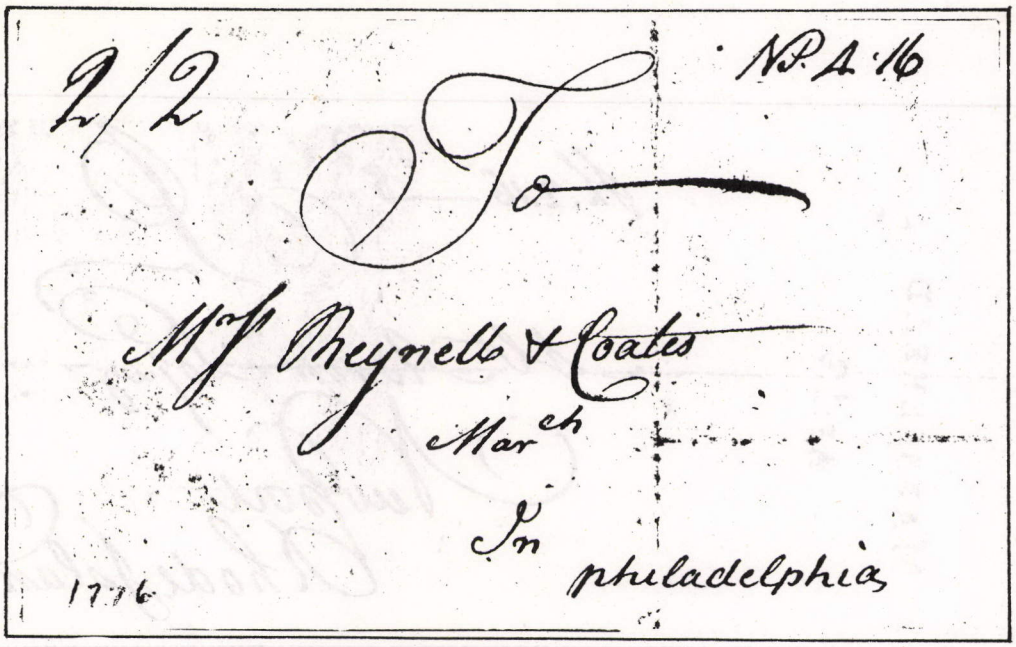


MA 15. MARBLEHEAD, black, 41 x 3, AP(ril): 12, all on reverse, 1775. From Gothenburg, Sweden, October 9, 1774, to Newport. Ship letter, 2 dwts, 16 gr. 8 pence local currency. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

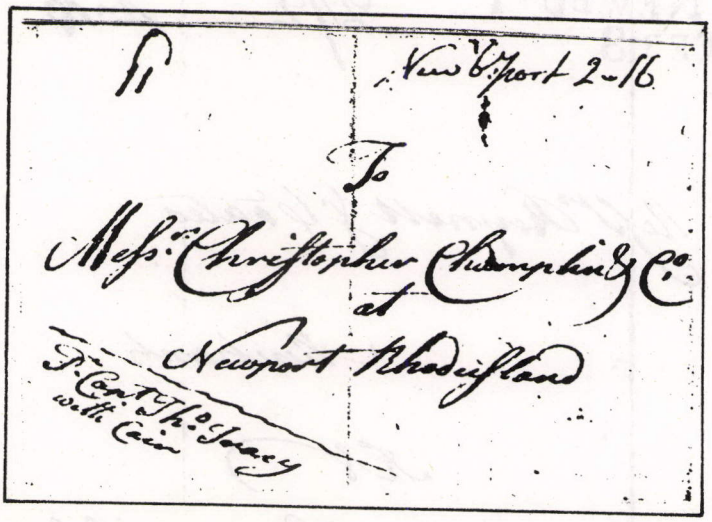


MA 16. NEWBURY, black, 28 x 5, FEB(ruary) 3, 1775. To Philadelphia. 4 dwts, 16 gr. 2/2 local currency. (Joseph Carson).

MASSACHUSETTS

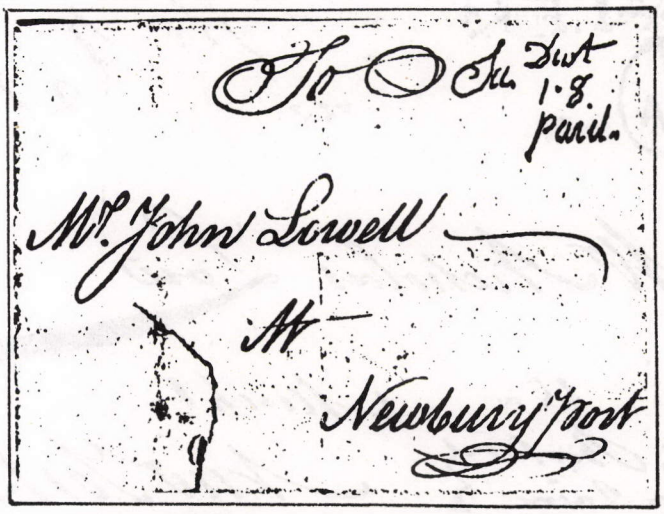


Ma 17. N(ewbury)P(ort), January 23, 1776, to Philadelphia. 4 dwts, 16 gr. 2/2 local currency. (Siegel Auction).

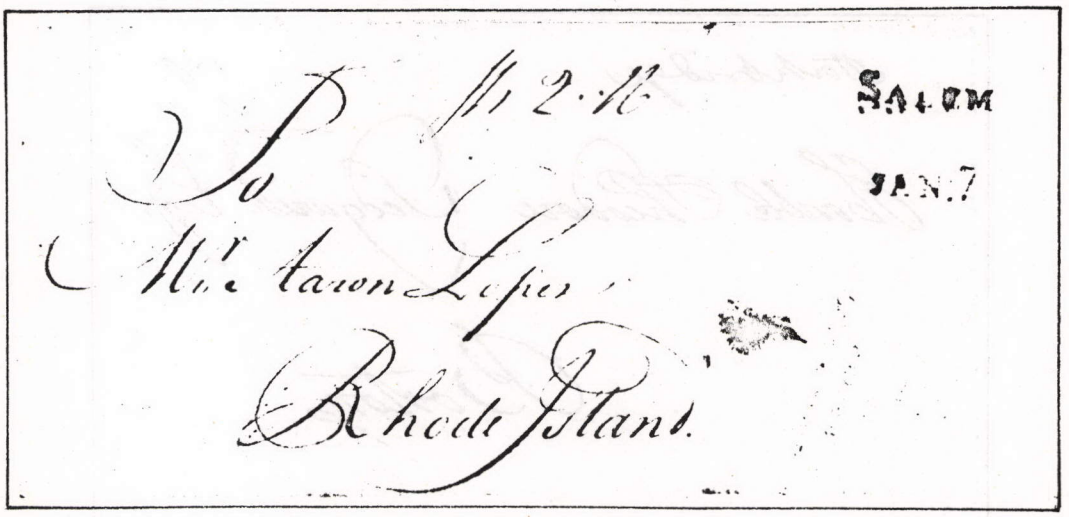


MA 18. Newb(ury)Port, from Gothenburg, Sweden, October 24, 1783, to Newport. 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS

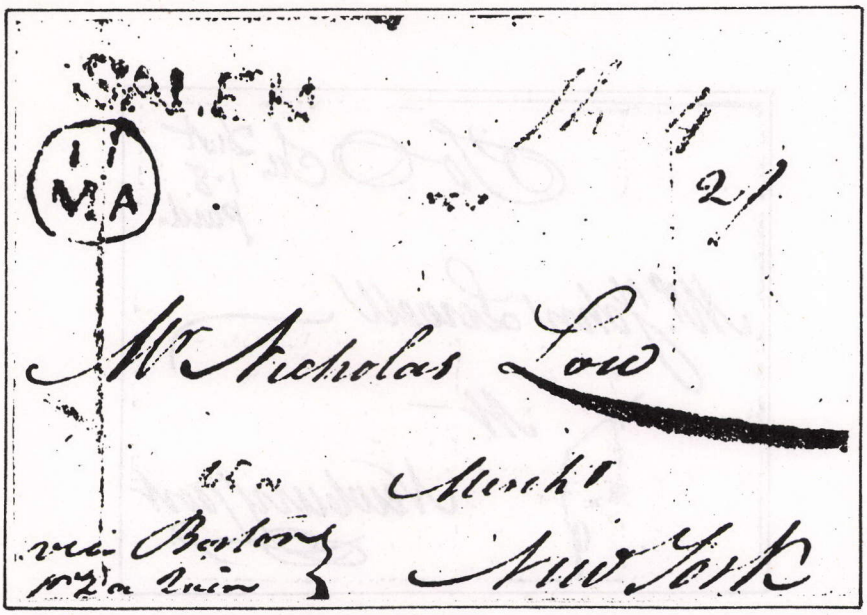


MA 19. Sa(lem), December 16, 1766, to Newburyport. 1 dwt, 8 gr. paid. Huntington Library. HM 8126).

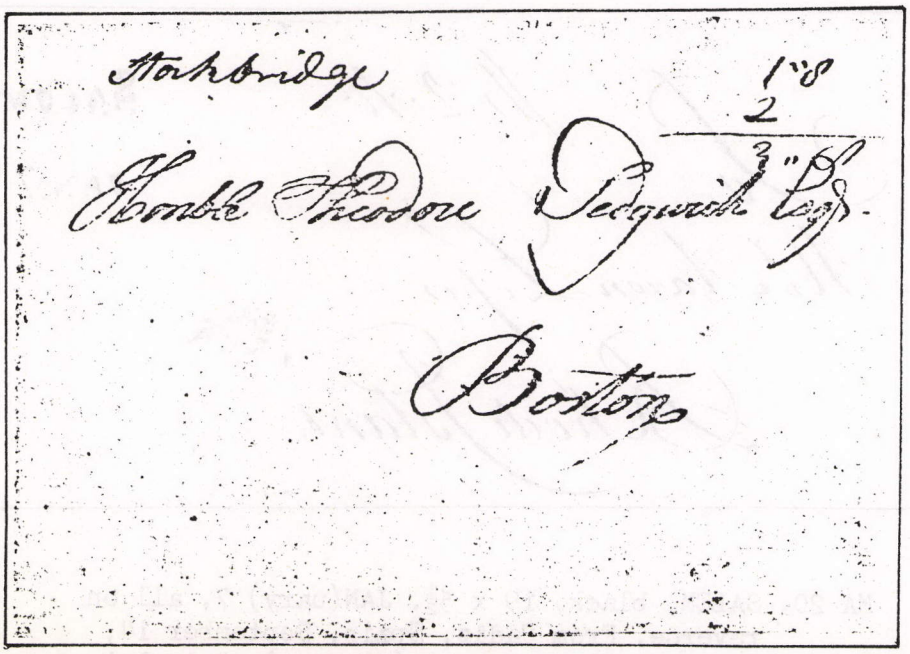


MA 20. SALEM, black, 19 x 5½. JAN(uary) 7, all on reverse. From Cadiz, Spain, September 14, 1774. To Rhode Island (Newport). Ship letter, 2 dwts, 16 grs. (Newport Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS

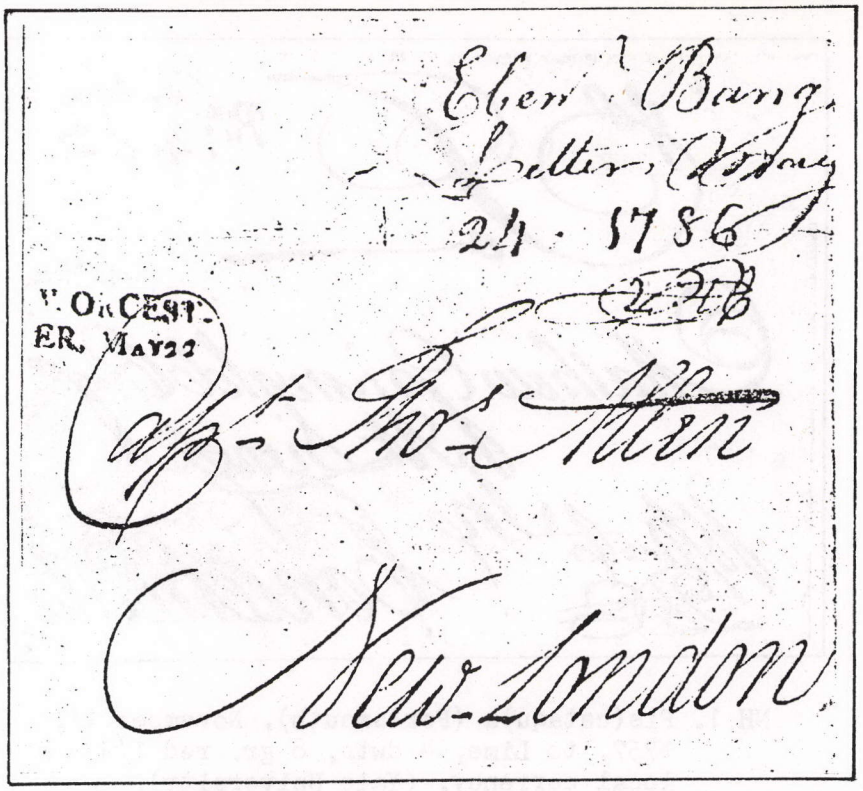


MA 21. SALEM, red, 32 x 6. Bishop mark 17/MA(y), from Havanna, Cuba, February 6, 1784, to New York via Salem. Ship letter, 4 dwts. 2/ local currency. (George W. Greene).

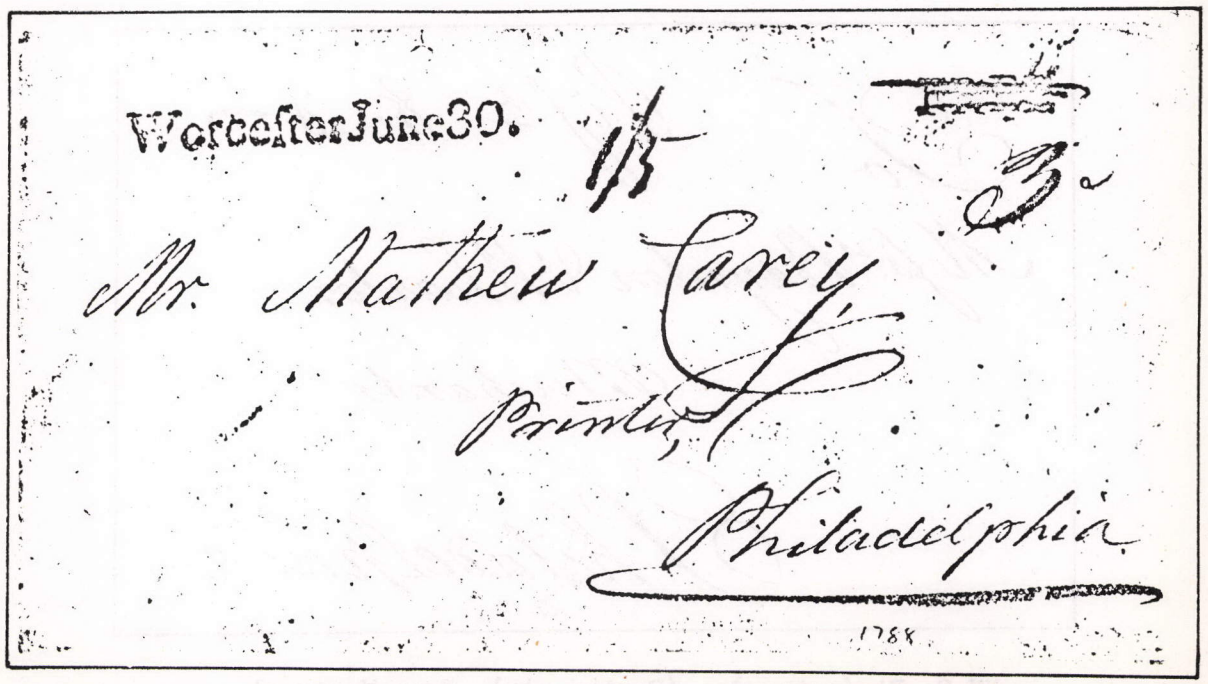


MA 22. Stockbridge, June 27, 1787, to Boston, Forwarded by Springfield. Rate 3 dwts, 8 grs. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

MASSACHUSETTS



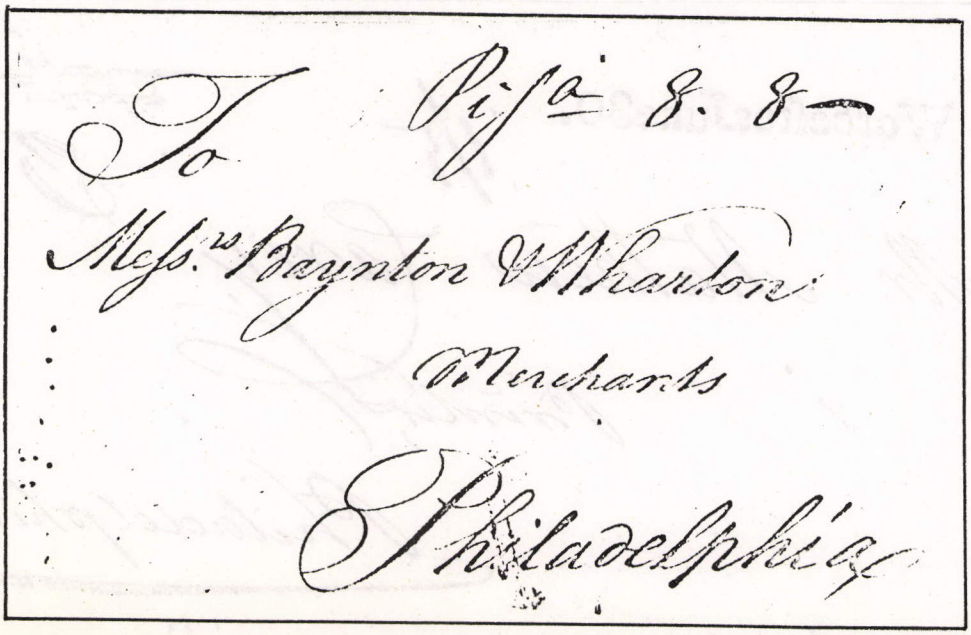
MA 23. WORCEST-/ER, May 22, black, 26 x 7. 1786. (American Antiquarian Society).



MA 24. WORCESTER, red, 27 x 5, JUNE 30, 1788, to Philadelphia. Rate 3 dwts, local currency 1 sh. 5 d. (R.H.Lounsbery).

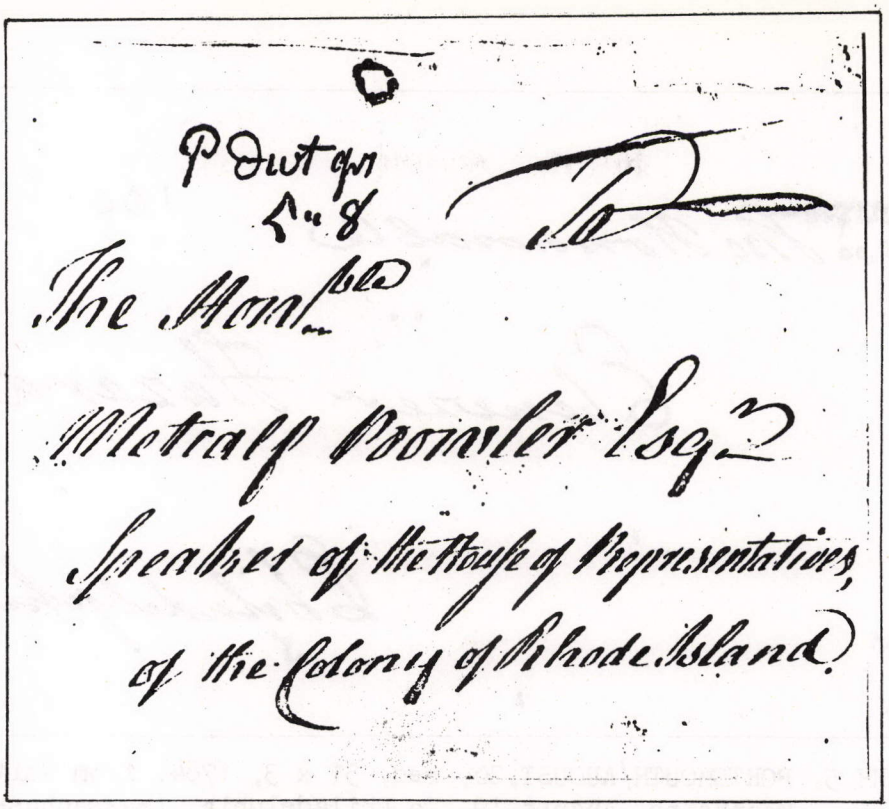
NEW HAMPSHIRE

NH 1. Pis(cataqu)a (Portsmouth), November 11, 1757, to Lime, 4 dwts, 8 gr. red 1/9 local currency. (Yale University).

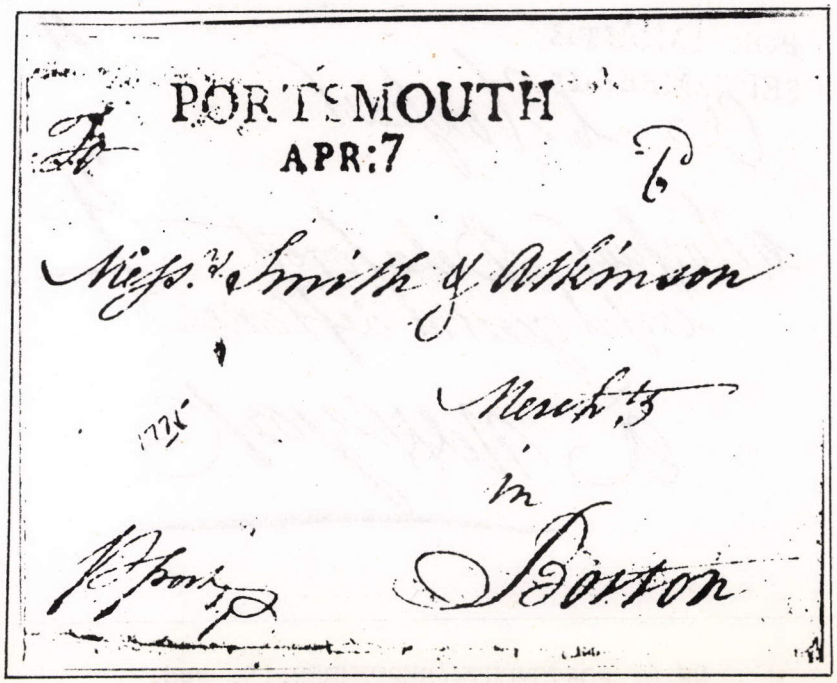


NH 2. Pis(cataqu)a, (Portsmouth), from Montreal, August 16, 1763, to Philadelphia, 8 dwts, 8 gr. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

NEW HAMPSHIRE

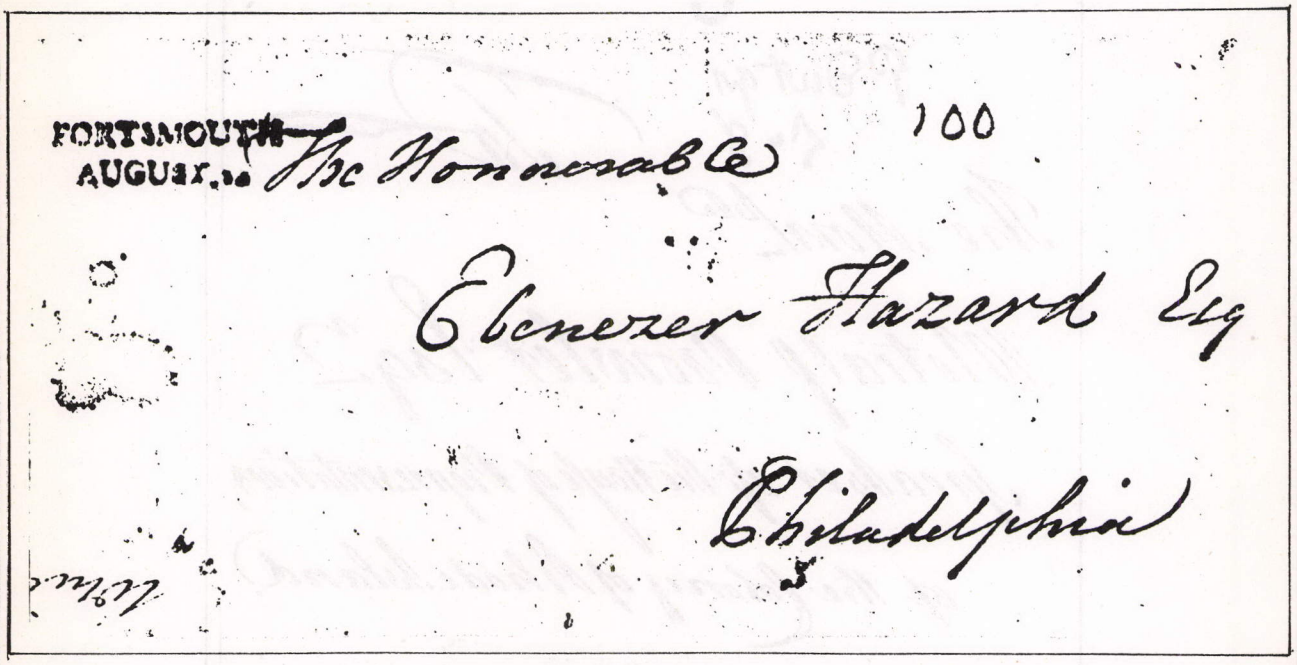


NH 3. P(ortsmouth), August 8, 1774, via Boston, August 15, to Rhode Island (Providence). 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Rhode Island State Archives).

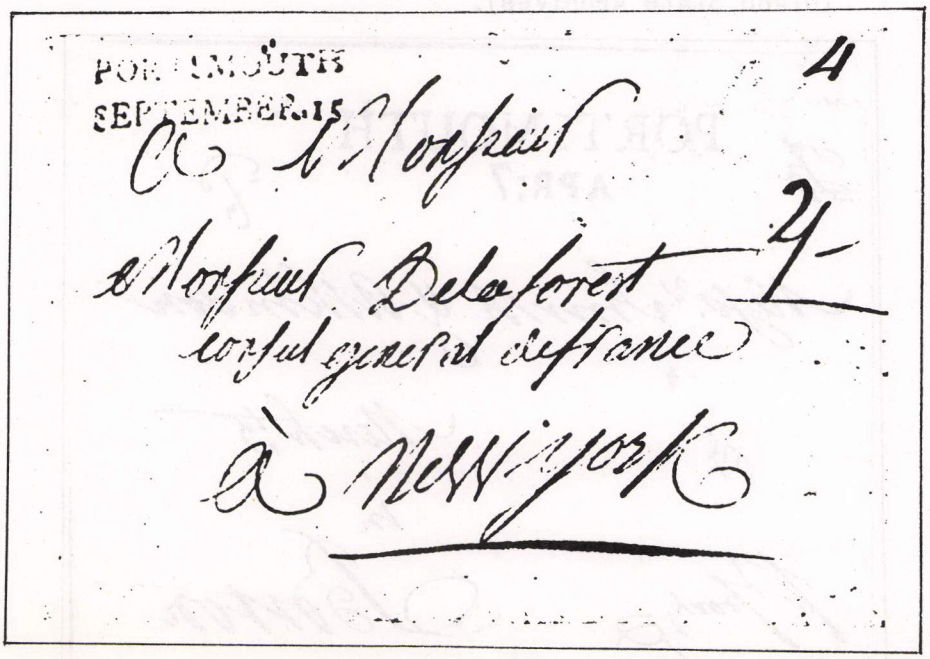


NH 4. PORTSMOUTH, black, 51 x 5, APR(il):7, 1775, to Boston. 6 pence. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

NEW HAMPSHIRE

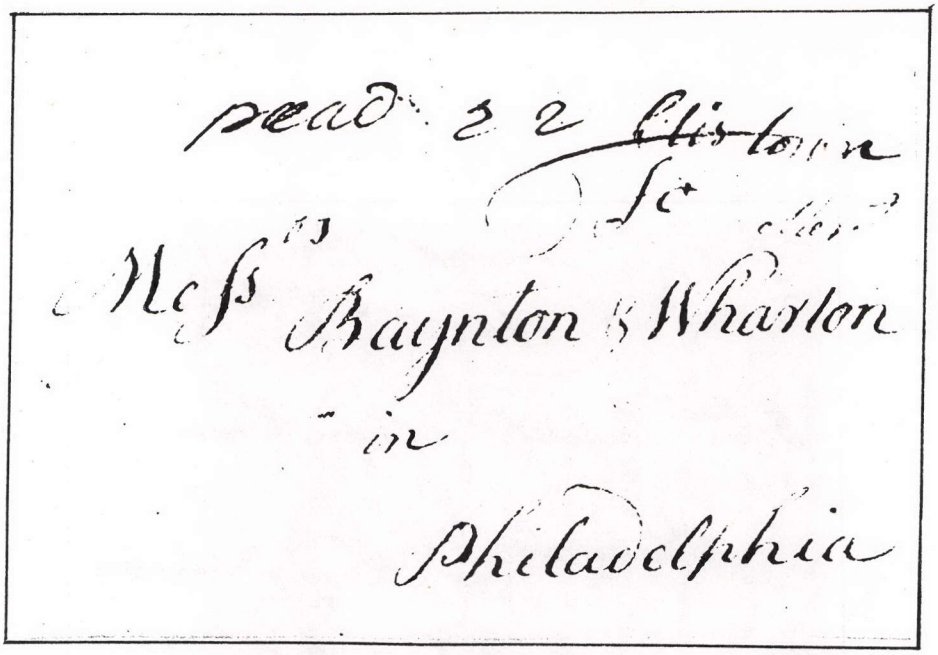


NH 5. PORTSMOUTH/AUGUST.20, red, 31 x 3, 1784, from White Mountains, August 19. To Philadelphia. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

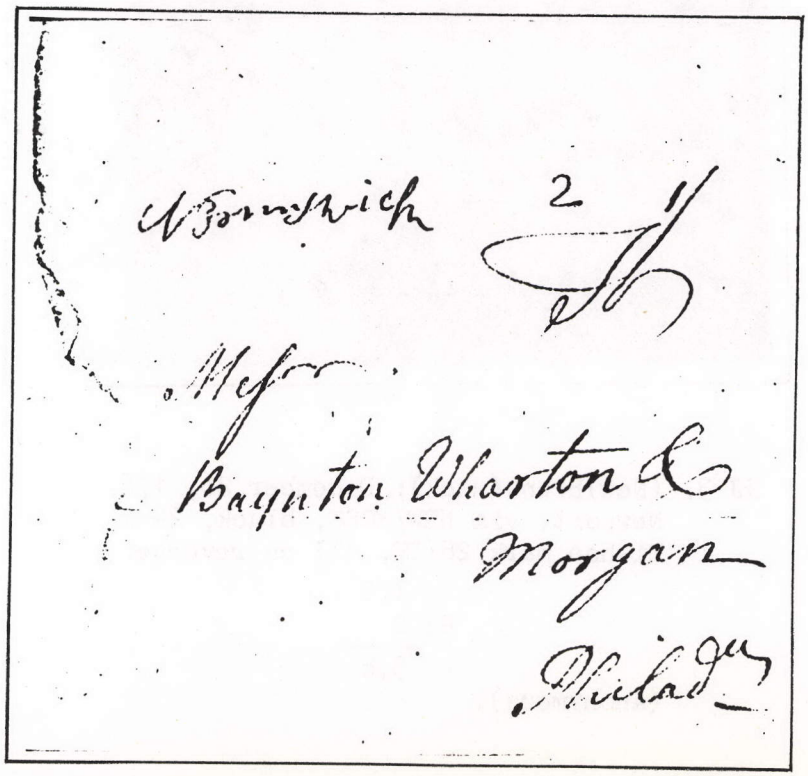


NH 6. PORTSMOUTH/SEPTEMBER.15, red, 35 x 3, 1786, to New York, 4 dwts. 2/ local currency. (C.F.Meroni).

NEW JERSEY

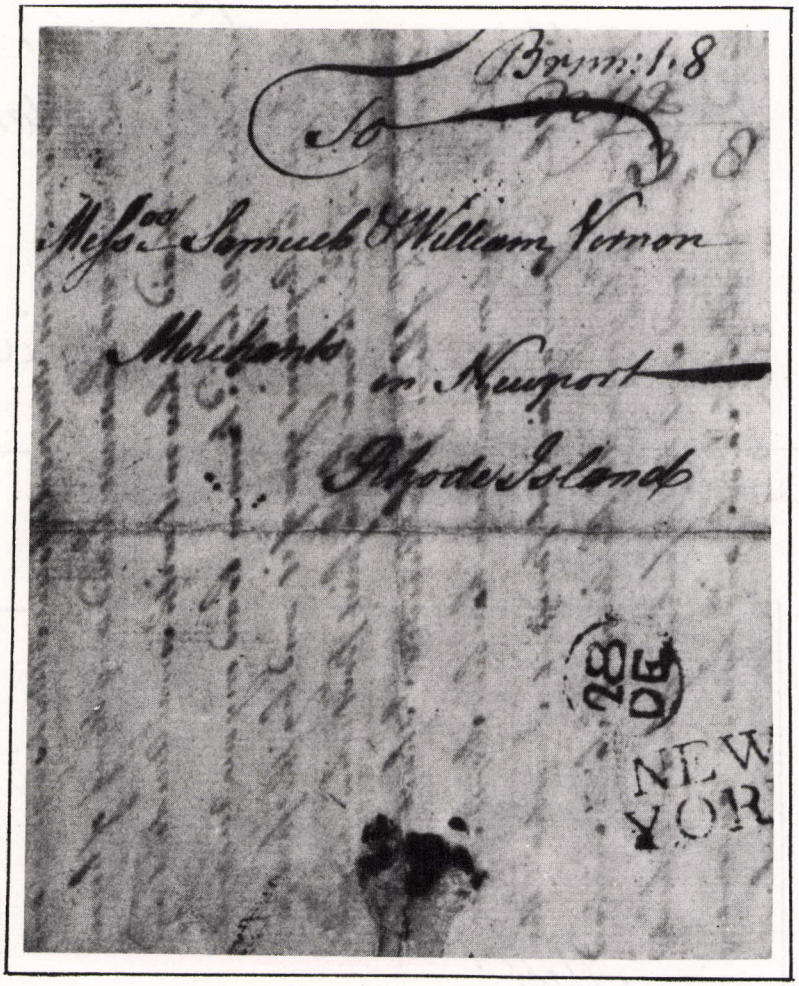


NJ 1. Elis(abeth)town, April 25, 1768, to Philadelphia. Paid 2 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).



NJ 2. N(ew)Brunswick, September 9, 1764, to Philadelphia, 2 dwts. 1/ local currency. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

NEW JERSEY

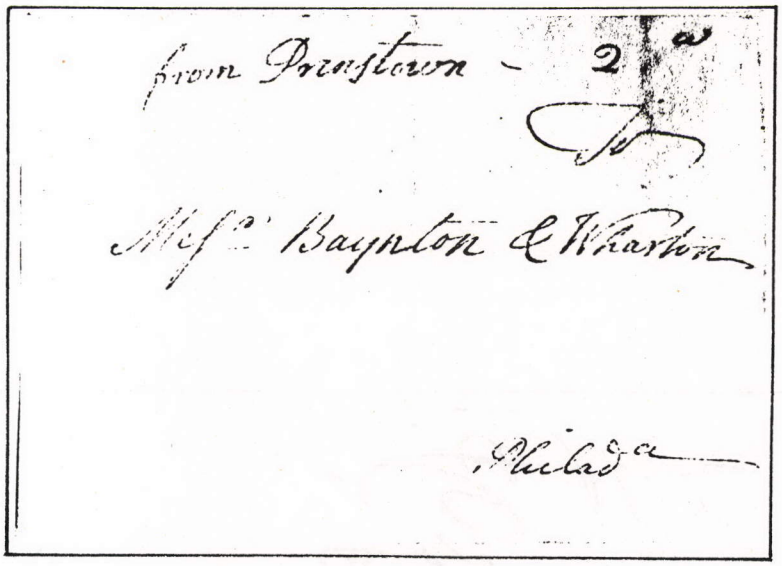


NJ 3. (New)Bruns(wick): December 26, 1767, to Newport, via NEW/YORK, black, 24 x 12. Bishop mark 28/DE, all on reverse.

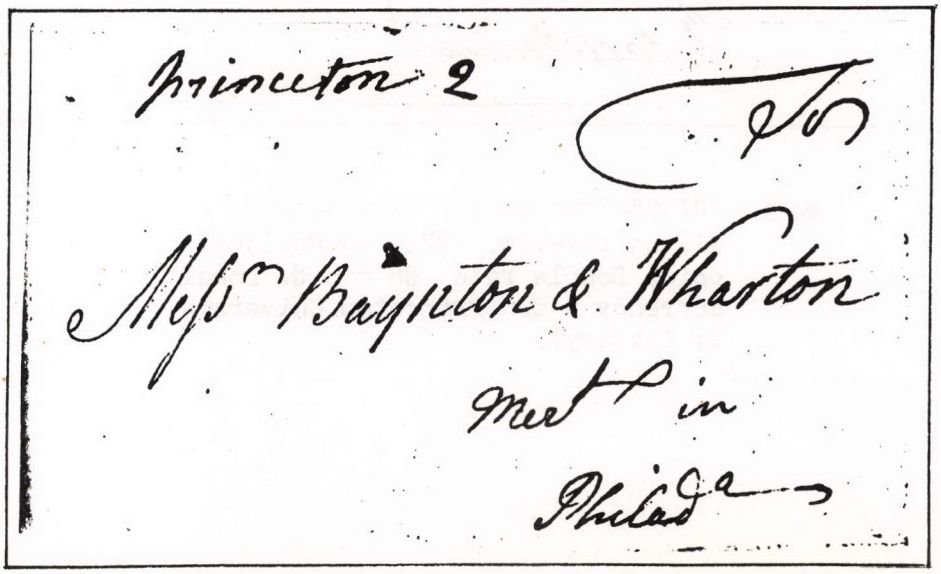
1.8
NY 2
3.8

(Anonymous).

NEW JERSEY

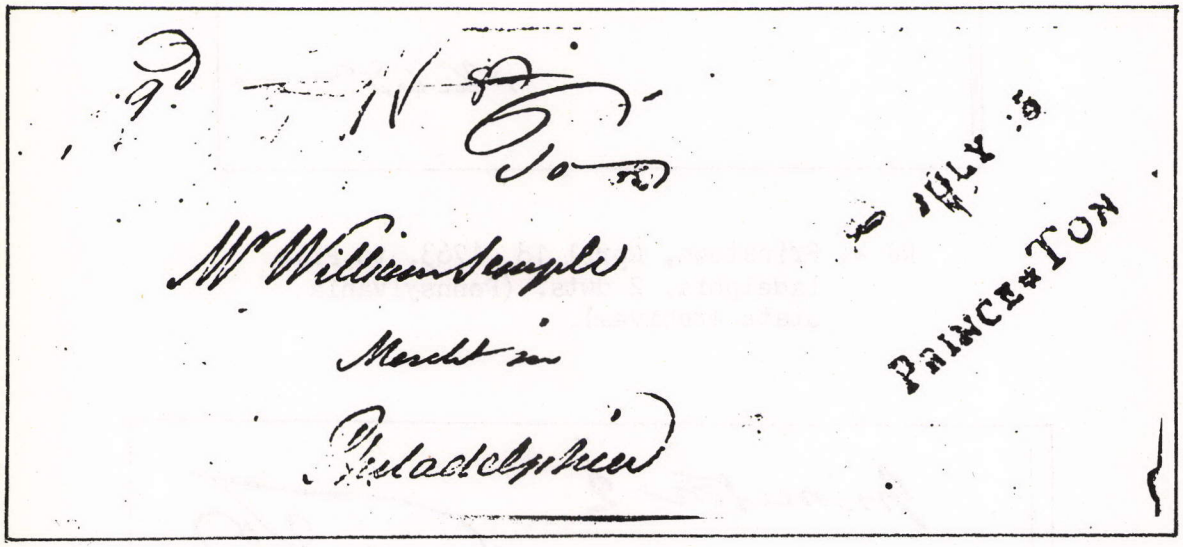


NJ 4. Prinstown, April 18, 1763, to Philadelphia, 2 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).



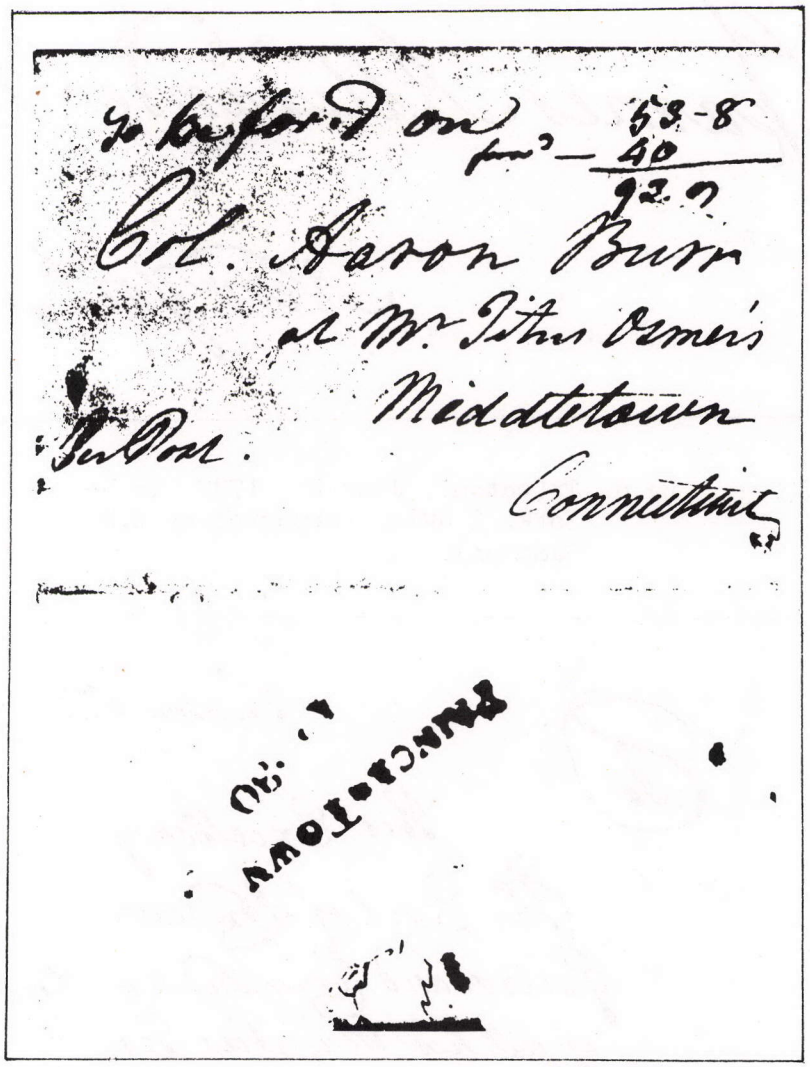
NJ 5. Princeton, March 10, 1764, to Philadelphia, 2 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

NEW JERSEY



NJ 6. PRINCE*TON, brown, 37 x 4, JULY :5, all on reverse, 1775, to Philadelphia. Double rate -N8 = 8 d. Local currency 9 d. (Princeton University Library).

NEW JERSEY

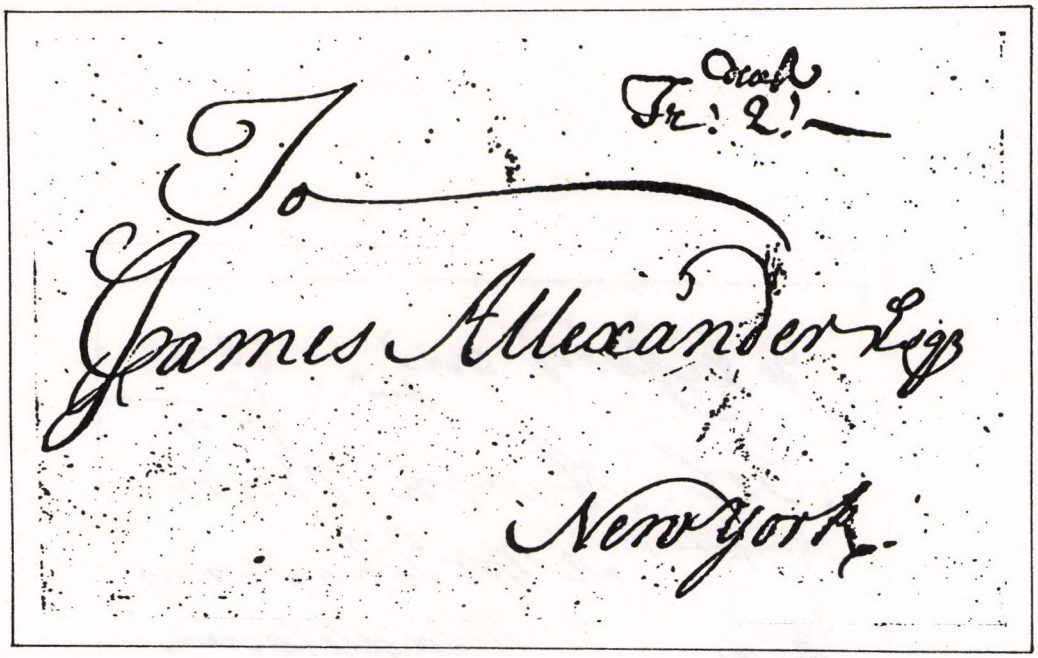


NJ 7. PRINCE*TOWN, black, 43 x 4, AP(ril):30, all on reverse, 1780. To Middletown, Conn.

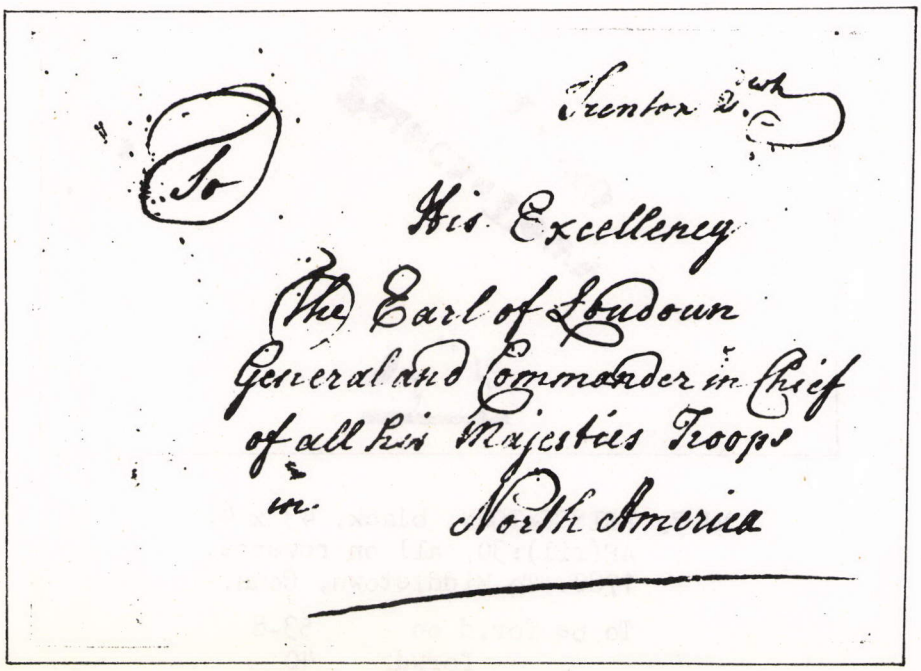
To be for.d on 53-8
forwd. 40
93.8

(American Antiquarian Society).

NEW JERSEY

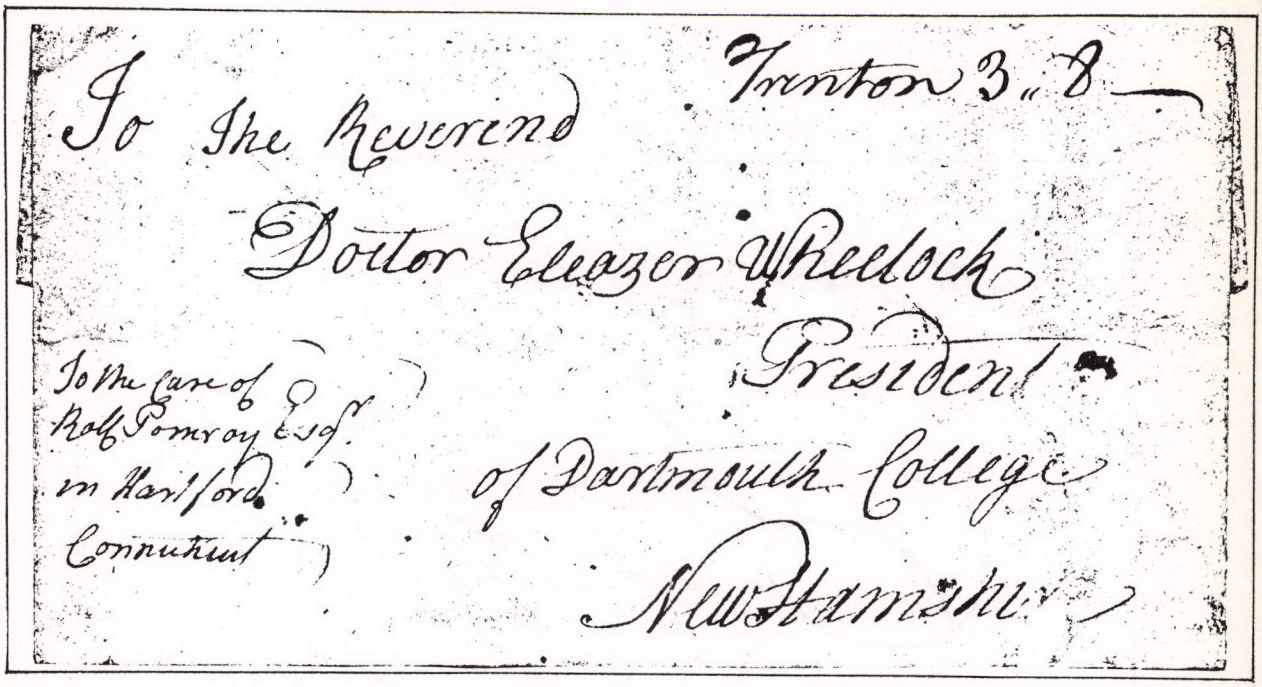


NJ 8. Tr(enton), June 23, 1737. To New York. 2 dwts. (Reported ny E.N. Sampson).

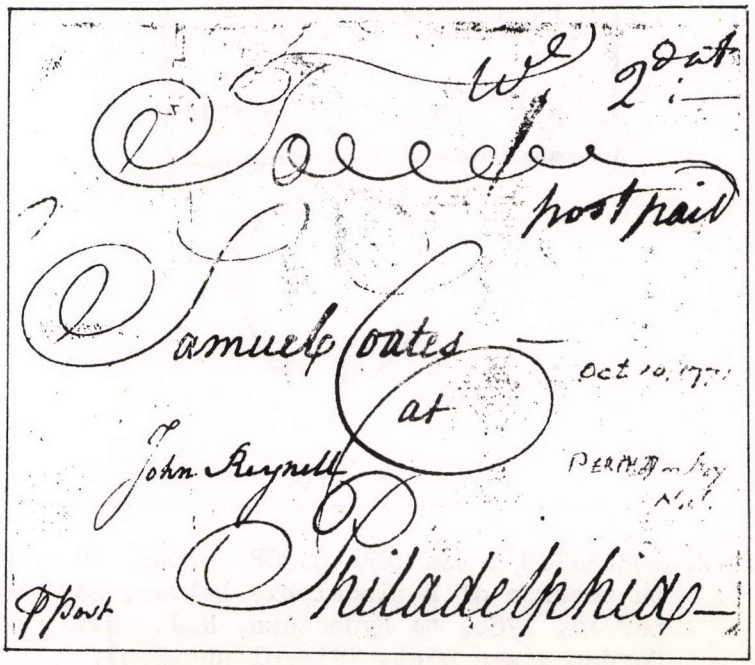


NJ 9. Trenton, October 10, 1757. To (New York). 2 dwts. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

NEW JERSEY

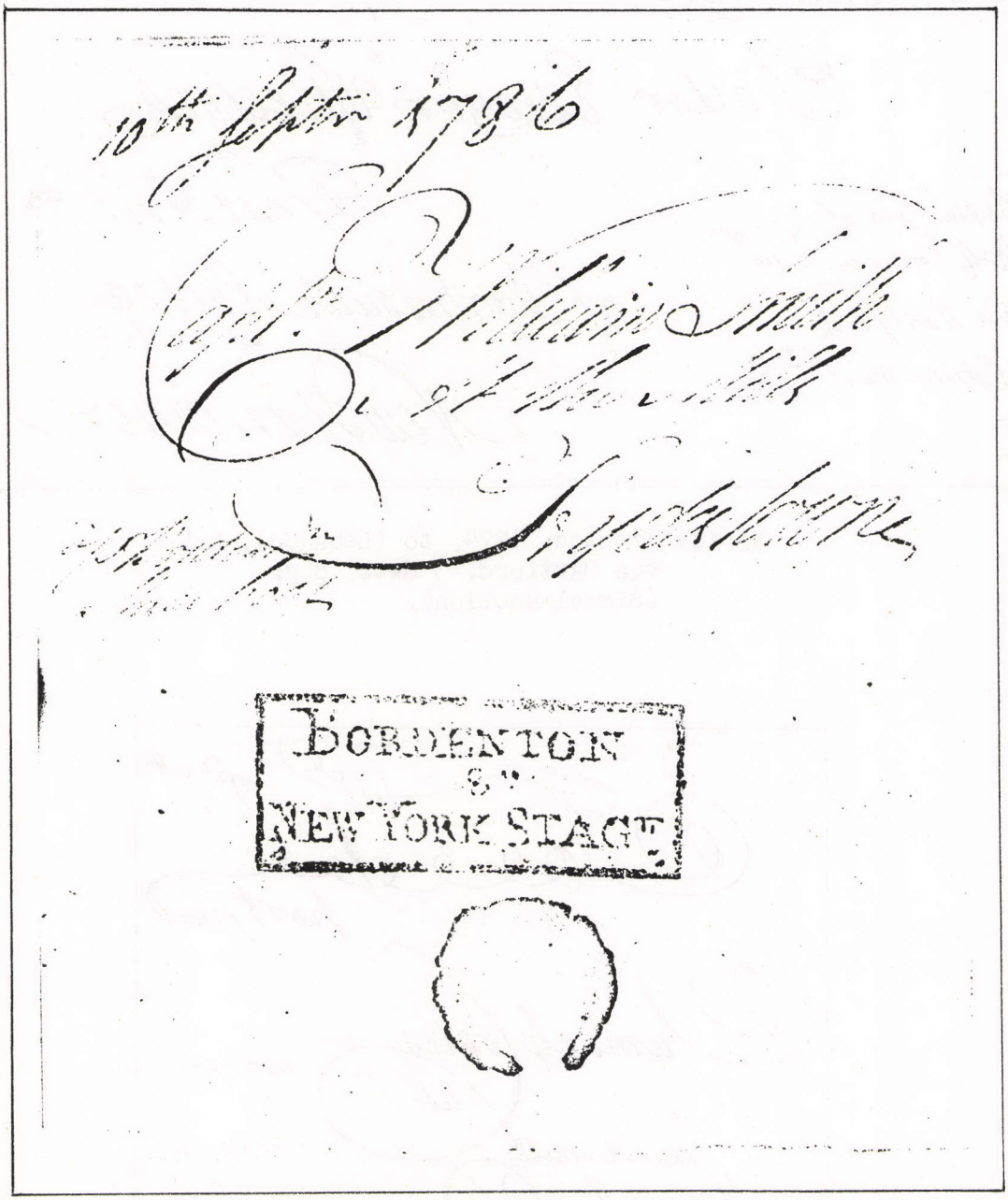


NJ 10. Trenton, 1774, to (Lebanon), N.H. via Hartford. 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Siegel auction).



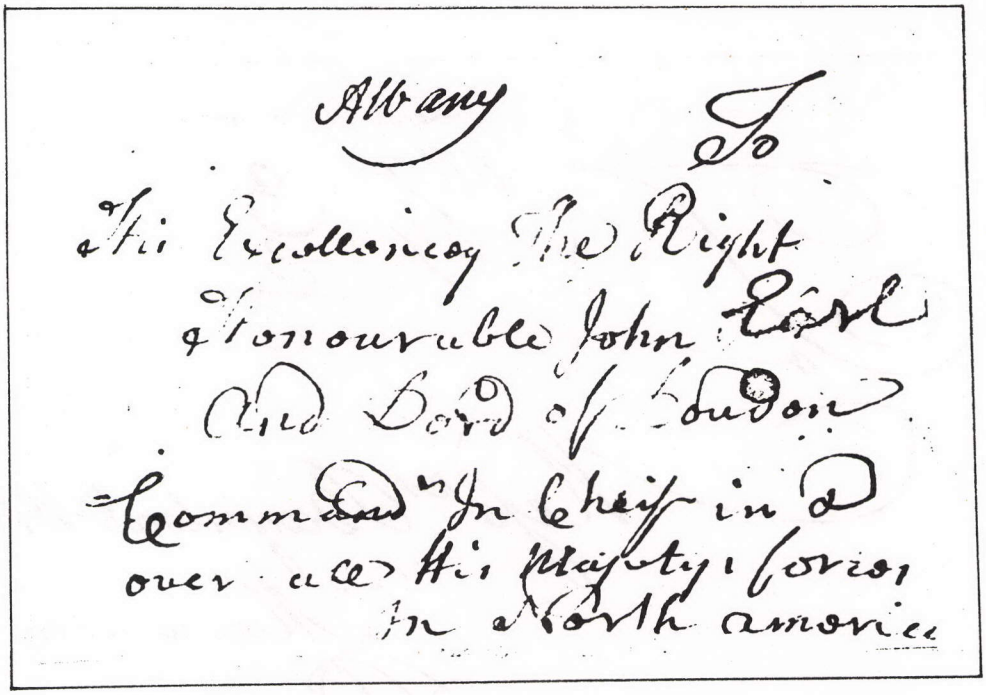
NJ 11. W(oodbridg)e, from Perth Amboy, October 10, 1771, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts, postpaid. (Siegel auction).

NEW JERSEY

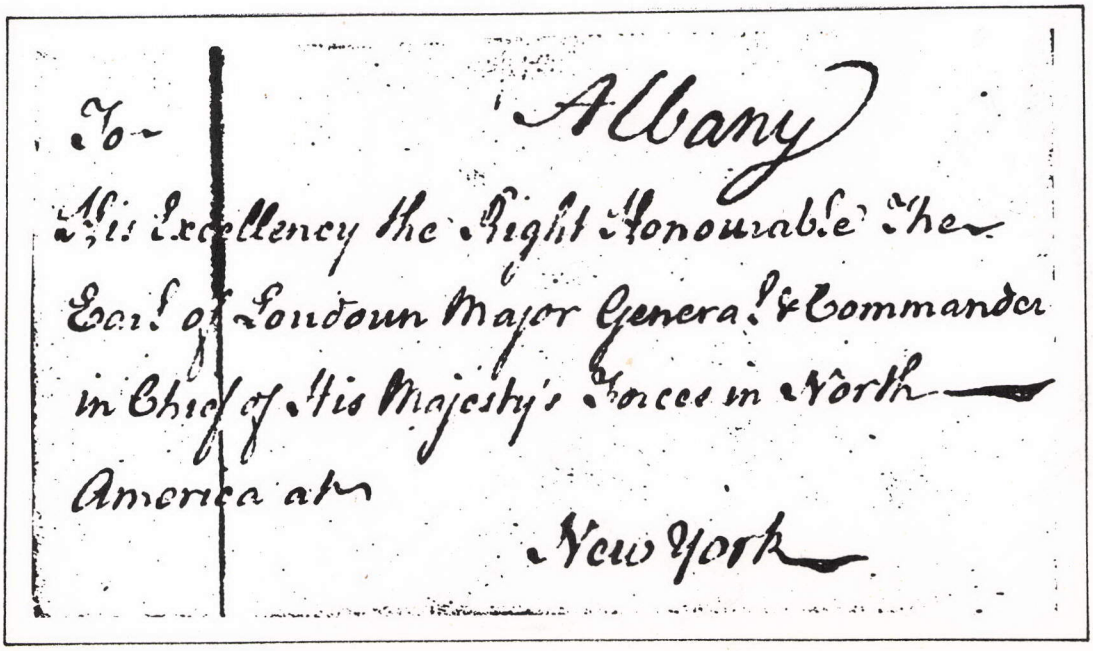


NJ 12. BORDENTON/&/NEW YORK STAGE, black, 60 x 24, on reverse of Philadelphia letter, September 10, 1786, to Hydestown, N.J. partly per Borden Stage boat. (Siegel auction).

NEW YORK

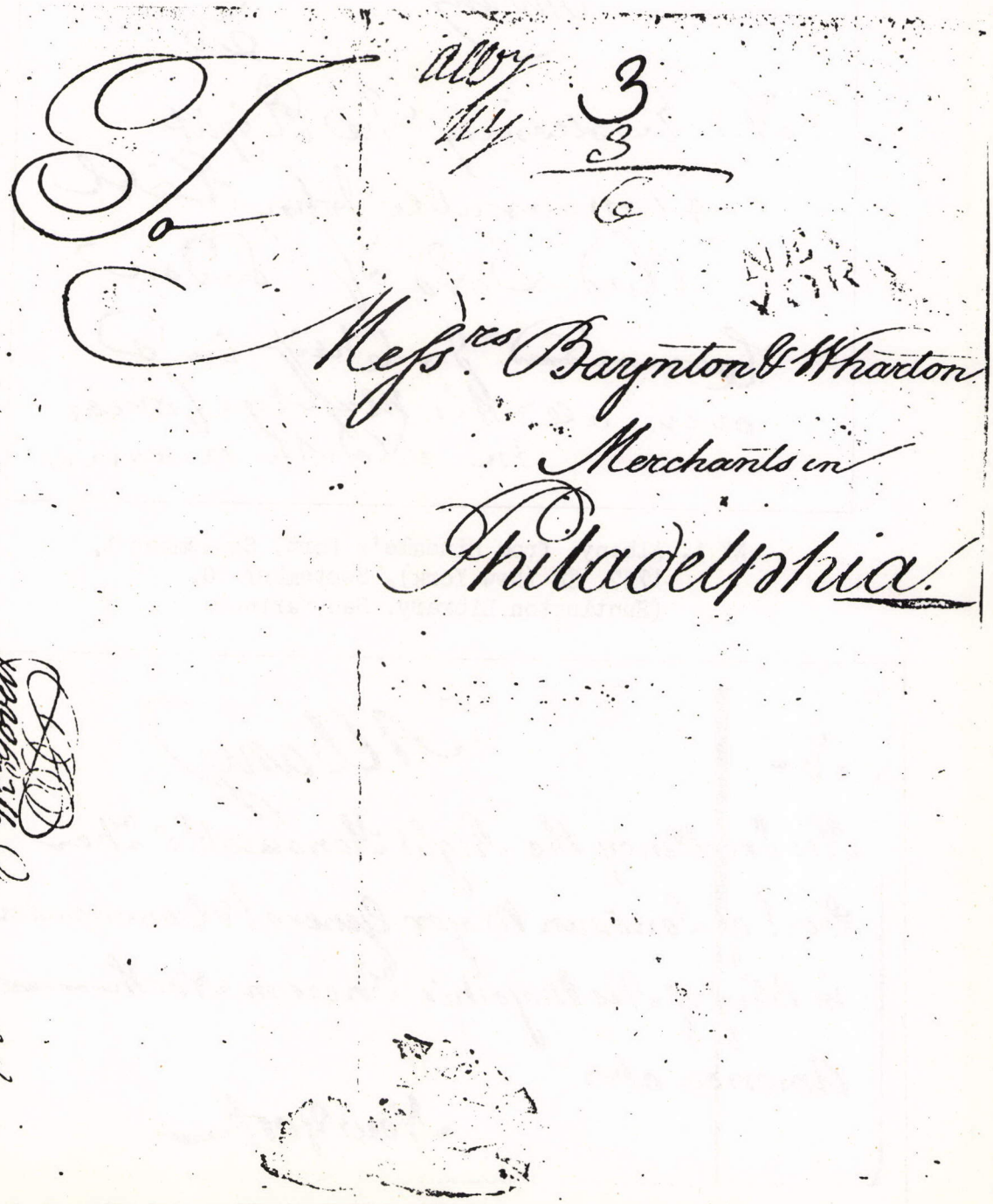


NY 1. Albany, from Hindale's Fort, September 1, 1757. To (New York), September 10. (Huntington Library, San Marino).



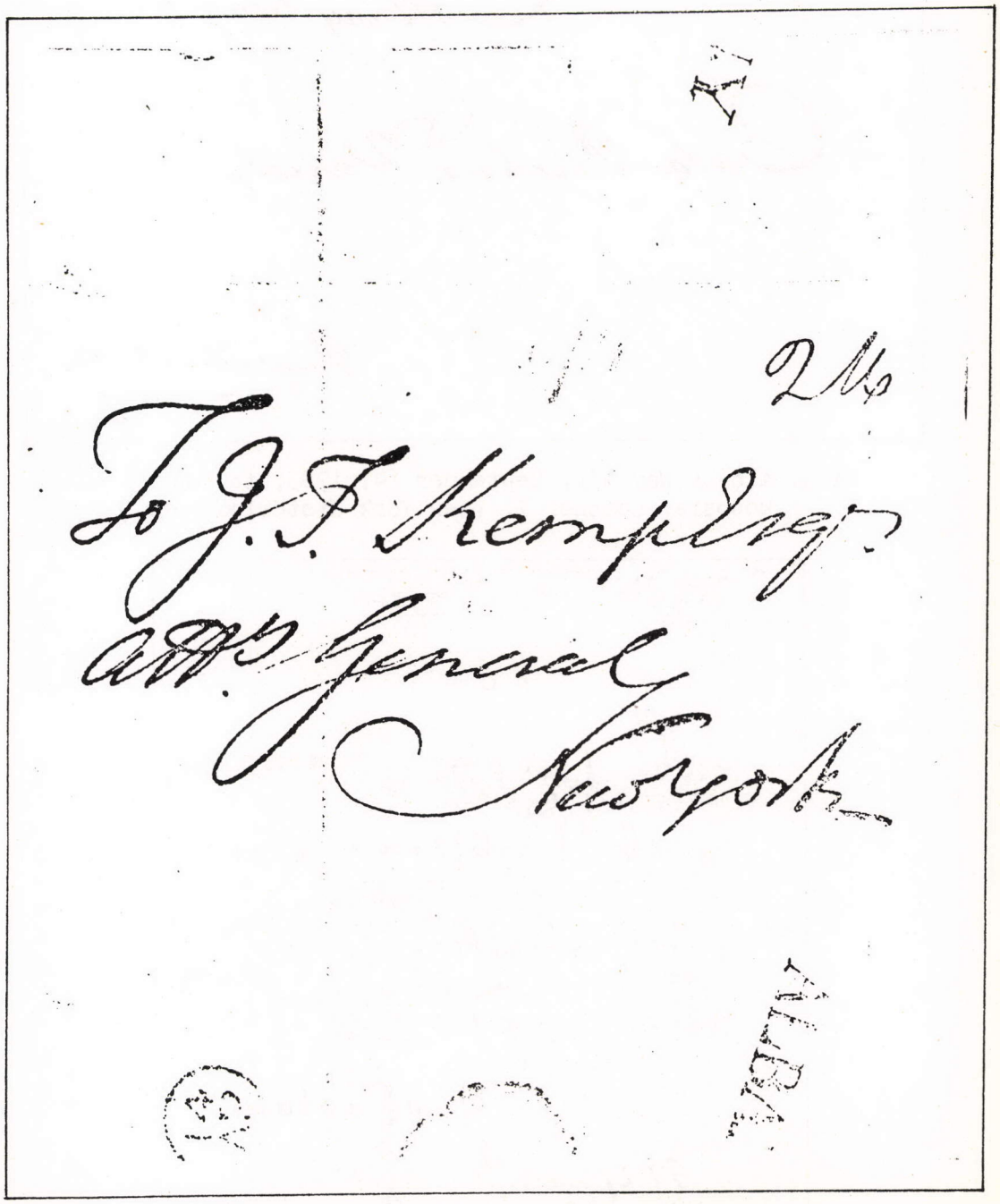
NY 2. Albany, January 23, 1758, to New York. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

NEW YORK



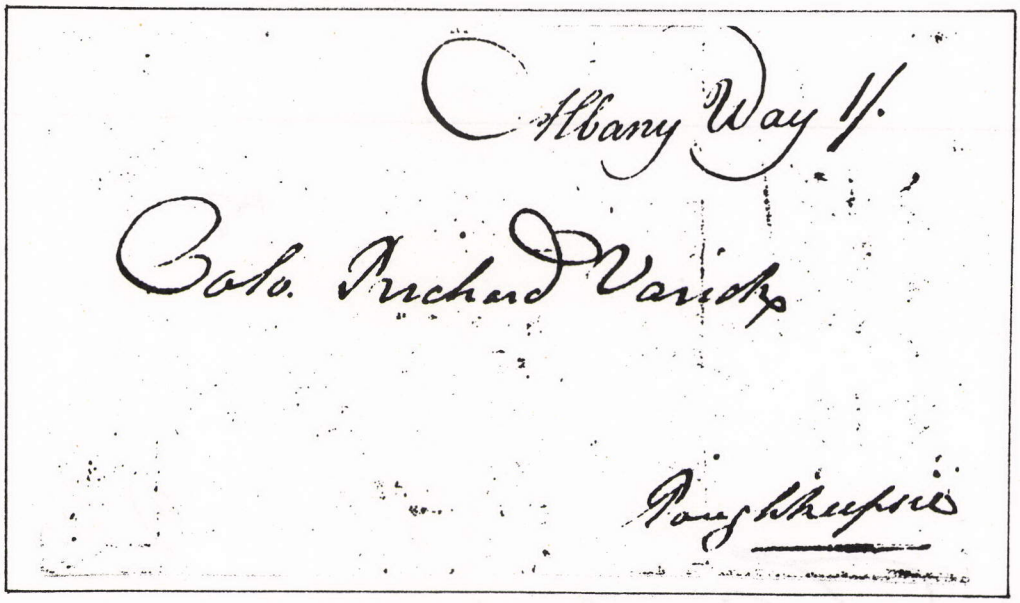
NY 3. Alb(an)y, 1761, from Quebec, November 26, forwarded from Montreal and NEW/YORK, red, 24 x 12, to Philadelphia. Albany rated 3 dwts, New York 3 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

NEW YORK

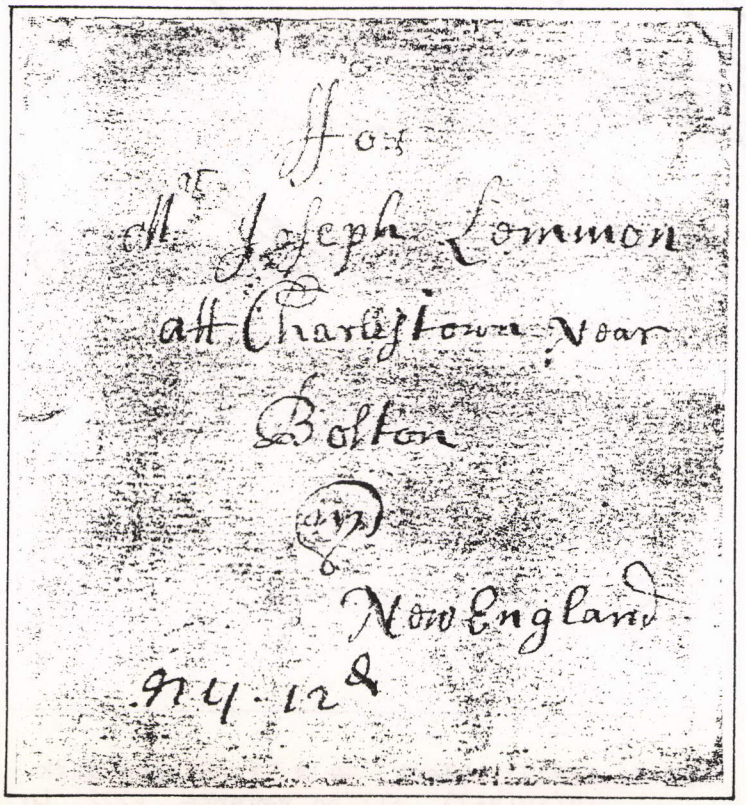


NY 4. ALBANY, black, 44 x 7½, Bishop mark 14/AP(ril), all on reverse, 1772, to New York, 2 dwts, 16 gr. 1/4 local currency. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

NEW YORK



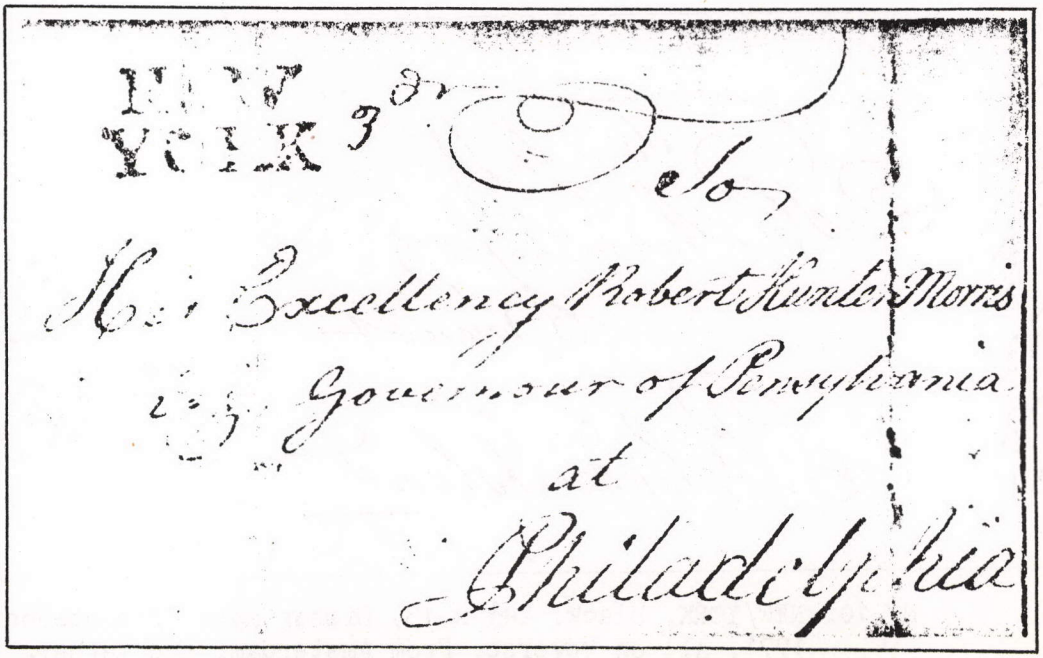
NY 5. Albany Way 1/., September 14, 1783, to Poughkeepsie, October 7. (New York Historical Soc.)



NY 6. N(ew) Y(ork), 1711, from Dorchester, England, December 6, 1710, to Boston, 12 d. (American Antiquarian Soc.)

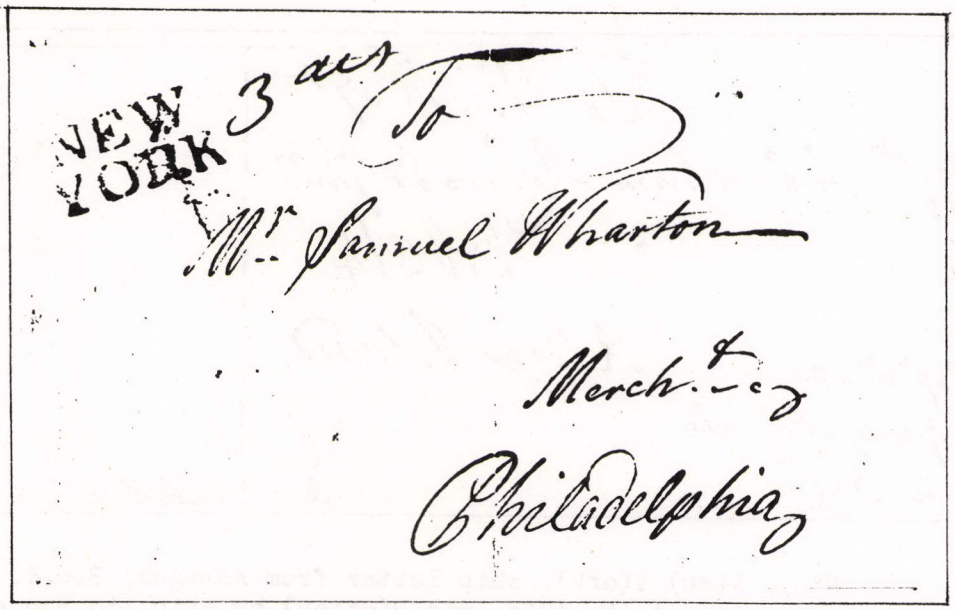
NEW YORK

NY 7. N(ew) Y(ork), ship letter from Antigua, B.W.I. August 19, 1726, via B(oston) by ship, to Rhode Island (Newport). Rated New York 17 pence. Boston 3/4. (Newport Historical Society).

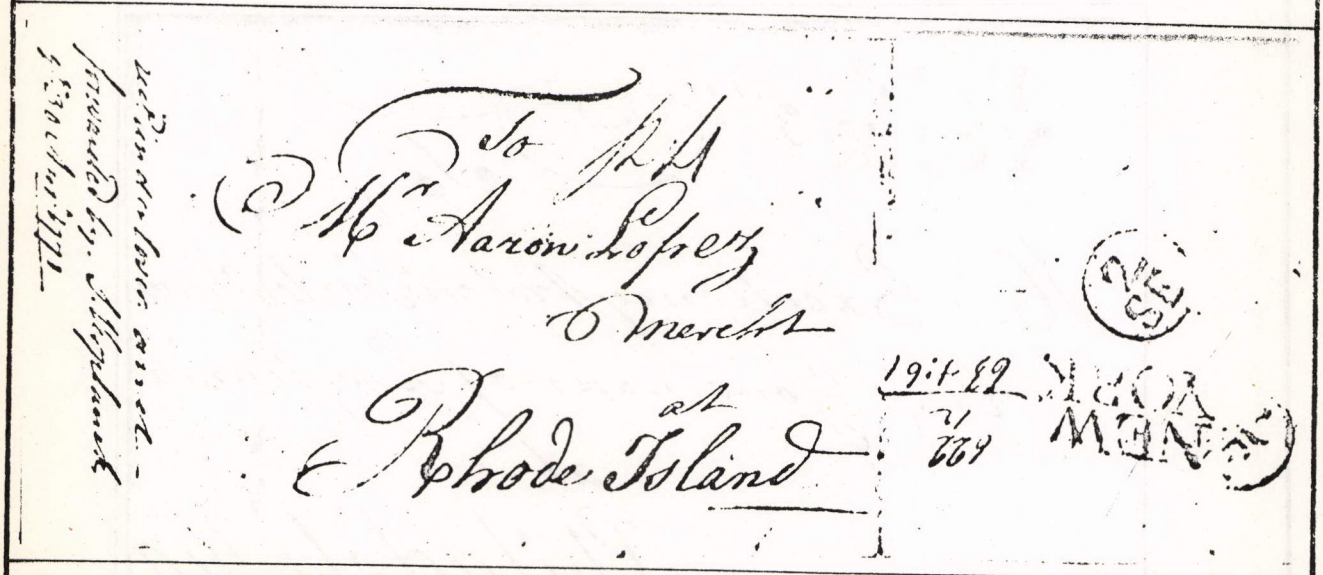


NY 8. NEW/YORK, black, 26 x 12½, June 17, 1756, to Philadelphia. 3 dwts. (Reported by E.N. Sampson).

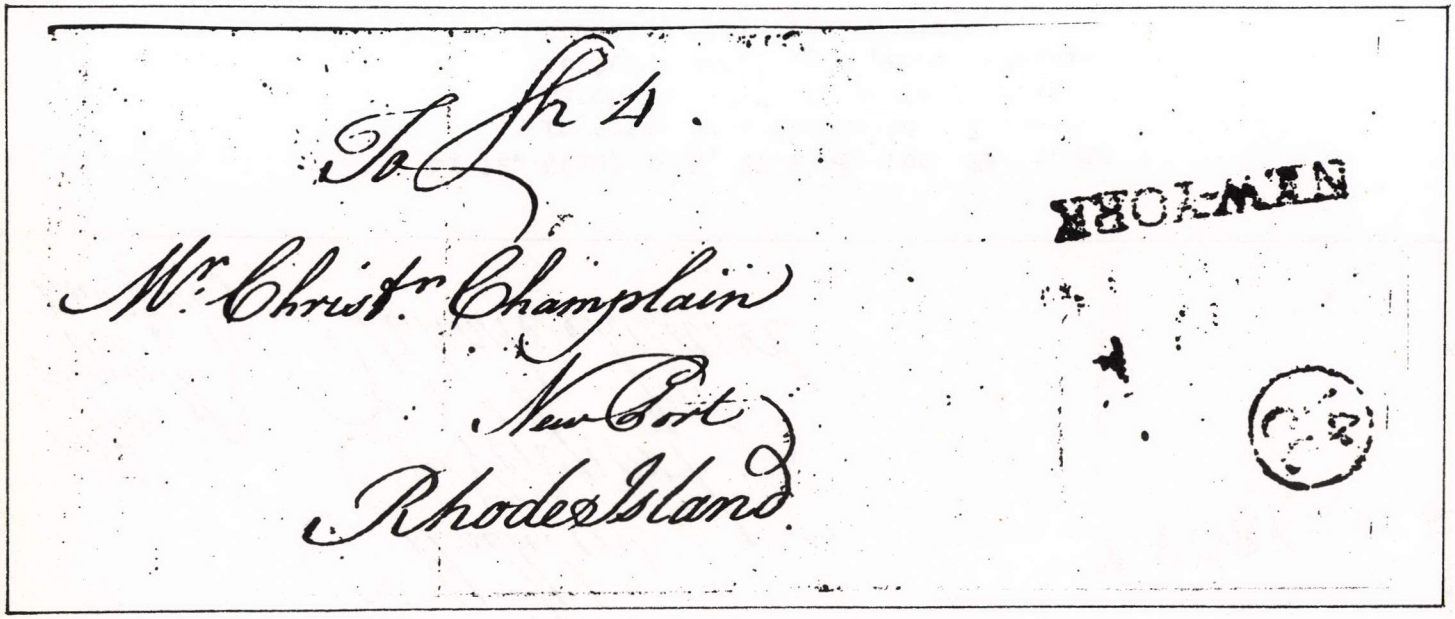
NEW YORK



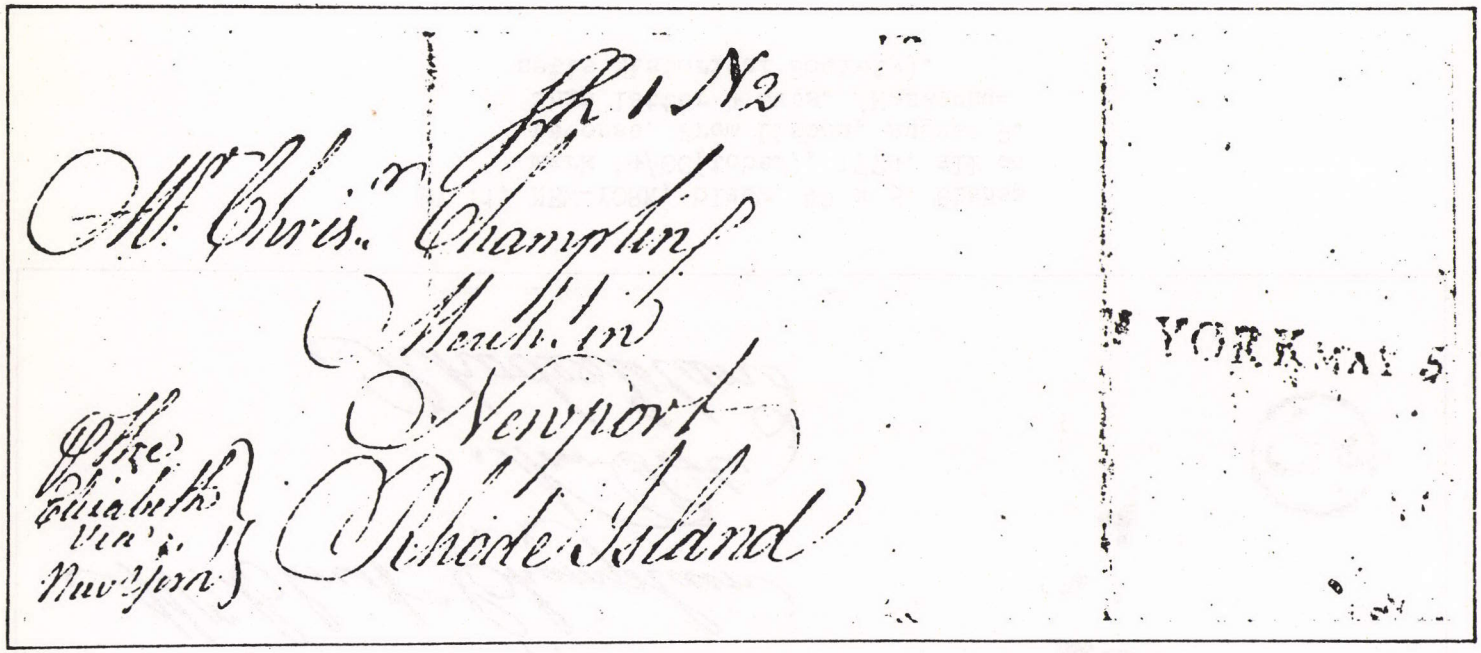
NY 9. NEW/YORK, magenta, 24 x 12, April 14, 1760. To Philadelphia, 3 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).



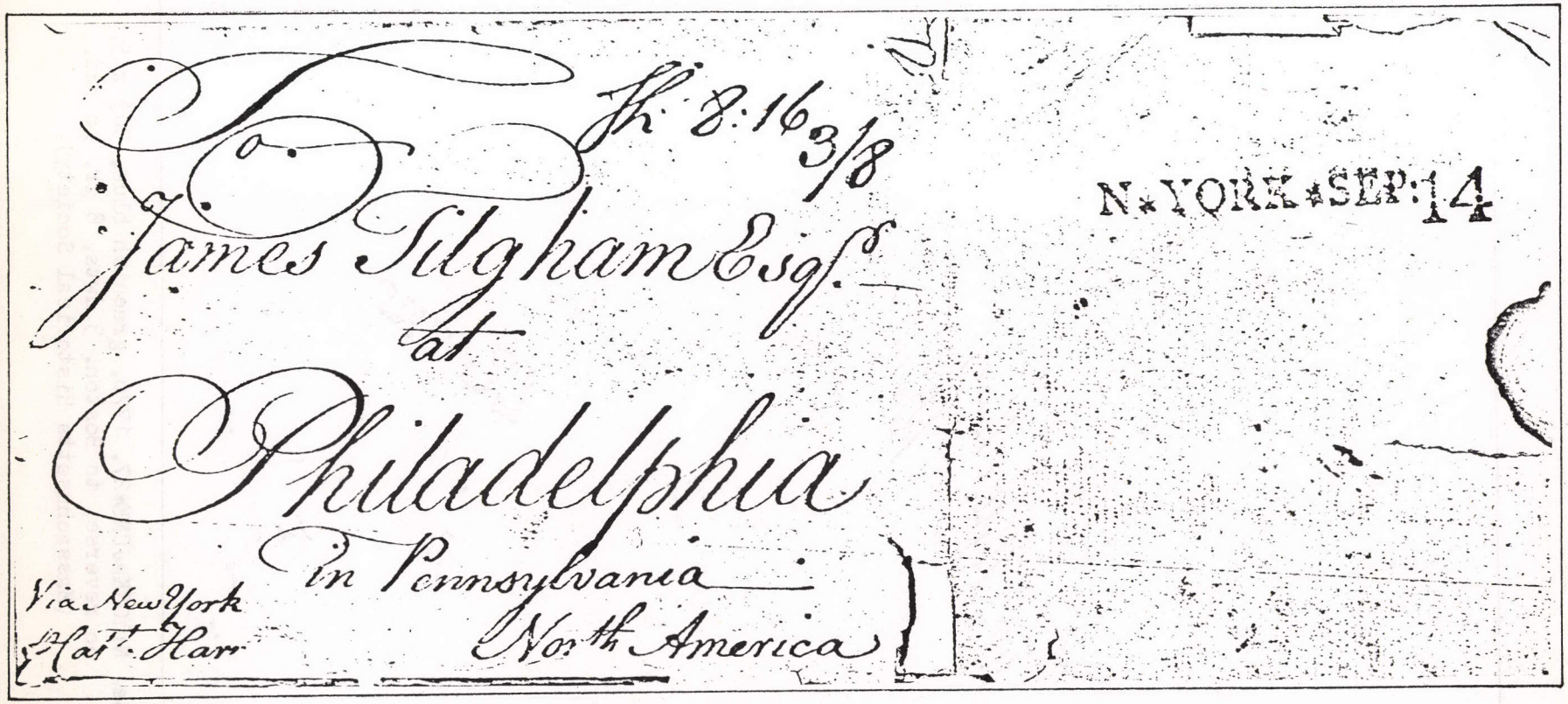
NY 10. NEW/YORK, black, 24½ x 13, Bishop mark 2/SE(ptember), 1771, all on reverse. From Amsterdam, the Netherlands, June 28. Forwarded from New York, August 30, to Rhode Island (Newport). Ship letter 4 dwts. (Newport Historical Society).



NY 11. NEW-YORK, black, 40 x 5. Bishop mark 14/OC(tober), 1774, all on reverse. From Lisbon, August 9. Ship letter 4 dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

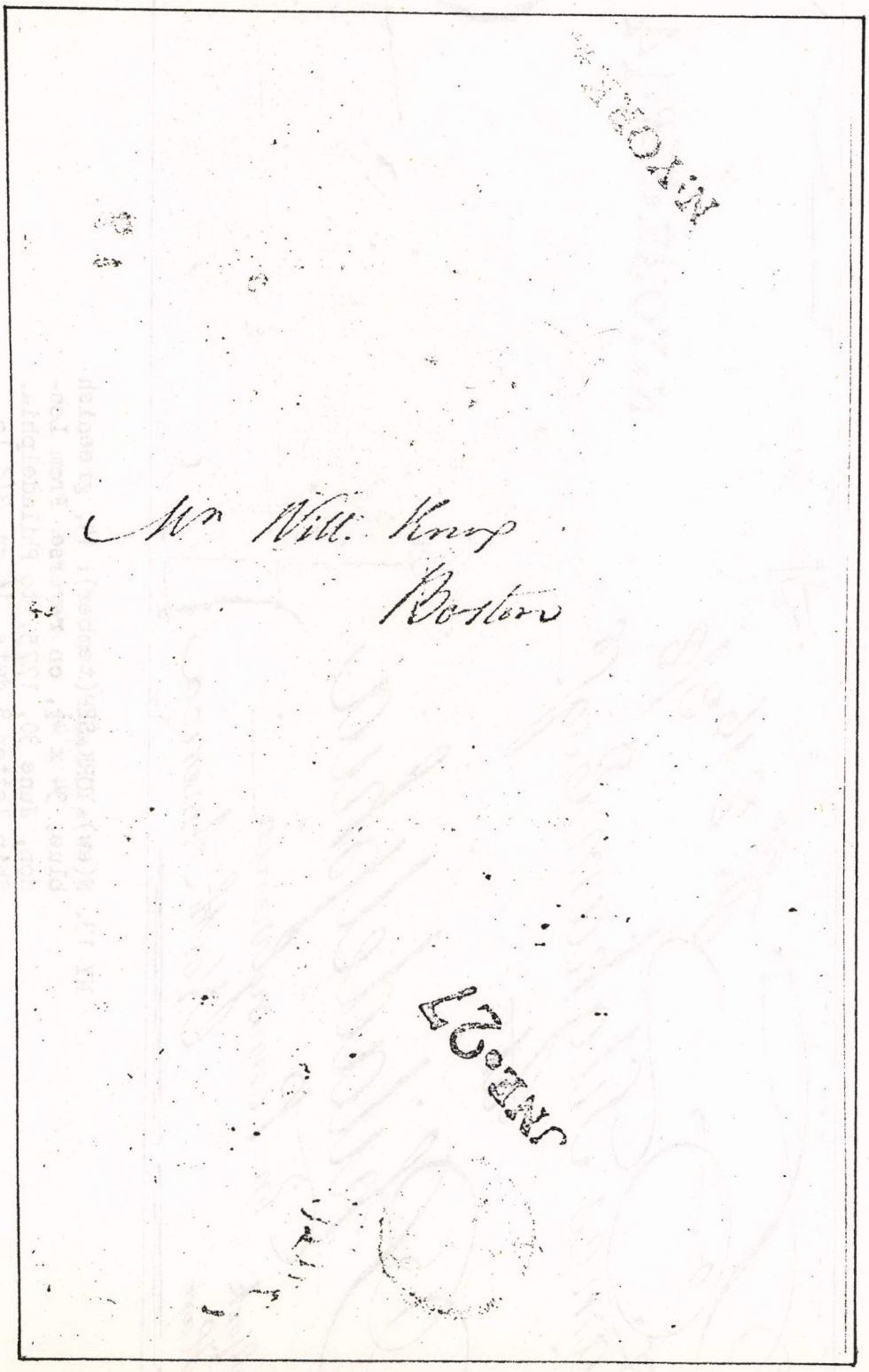


NY 12. N(ew) YORK, 27 x 4½, red, MAY 5, on reverse. From Manchester, England, March 10, 1775, to Newport. Ship letter 1 shilling 2 pence. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



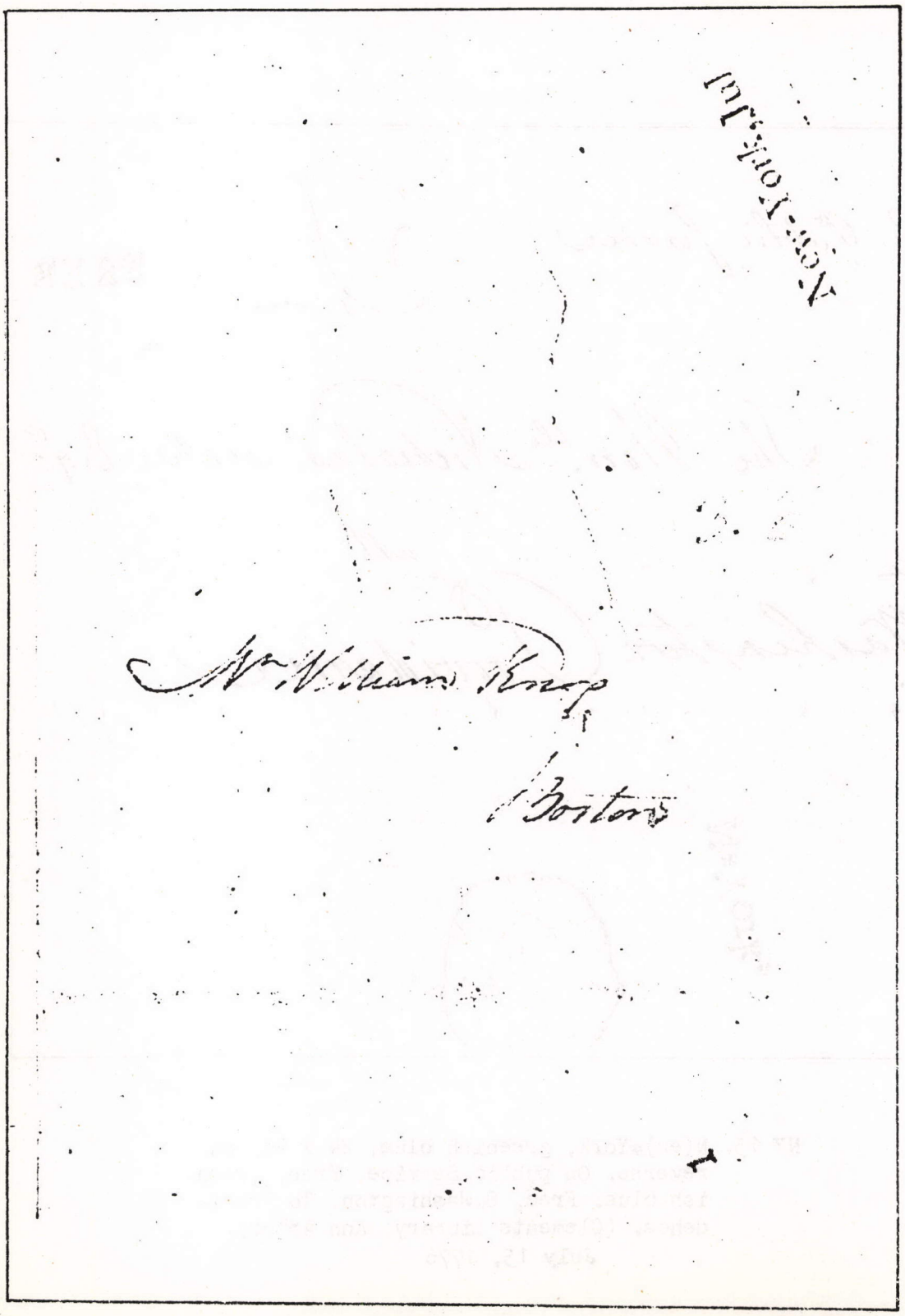
NY 13. N(ew)*YORK*SEP(tember): 14, greenish blue, 34 x 4½, on reverse. From London, June 30, 1775, to Philadelphia. Ship letter 8 dwts, 16 gr. 3/8 local currency. (H. Yeager, Glenolden).

NEW YORK



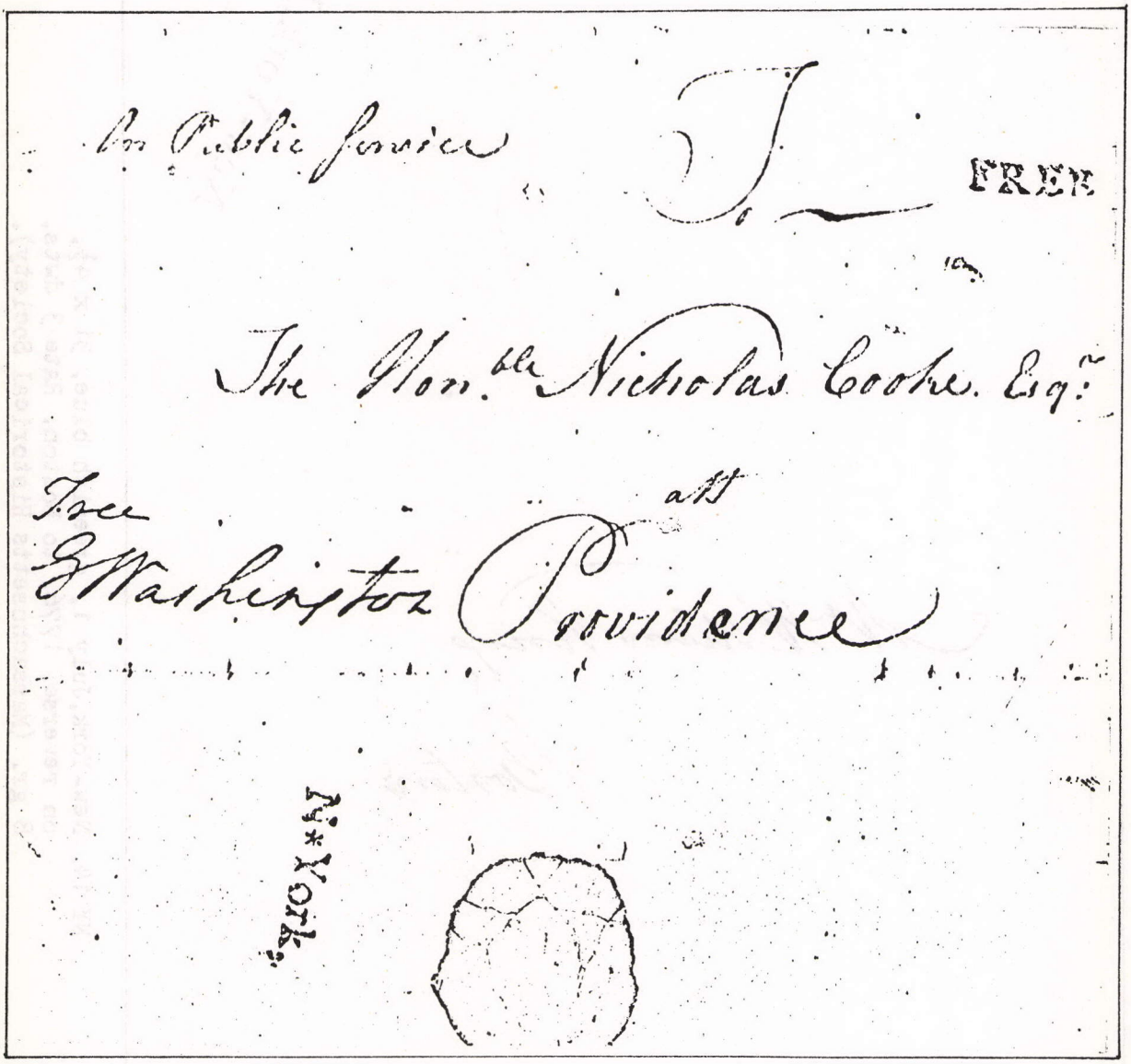
NY 13a. N:YORK*JUNE*27, 1776, greenish blue, 30½ x 5, on reverse, to Boston. 3 dwts, 8 gr, in red. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

NEW YORK



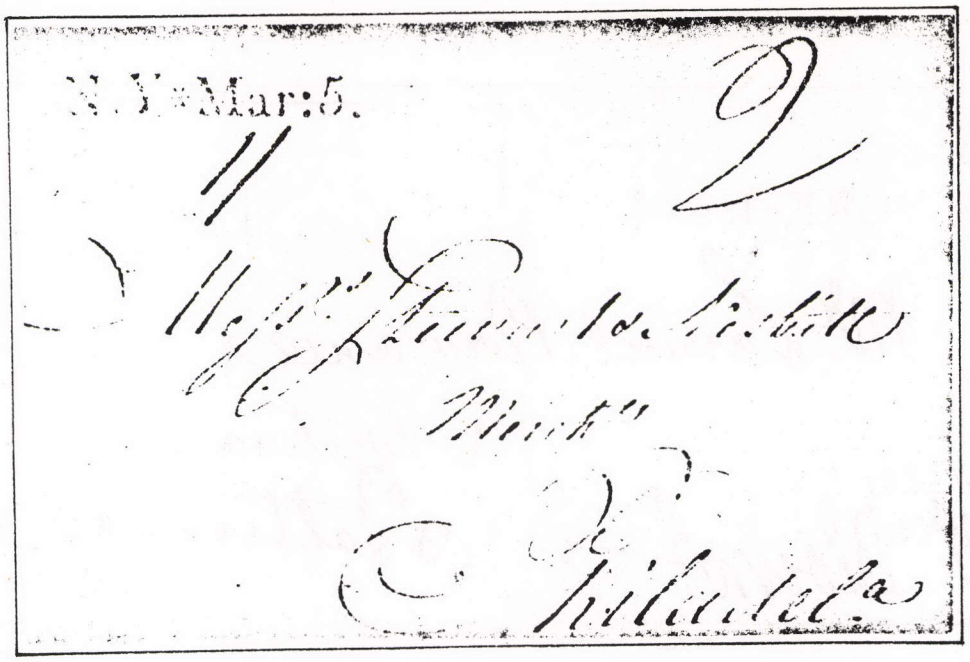
NY 14. New-York, July 1, greenish blue, 31 x 4½, on reverse, 1776, to Boston. Rate 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

NEW YORK

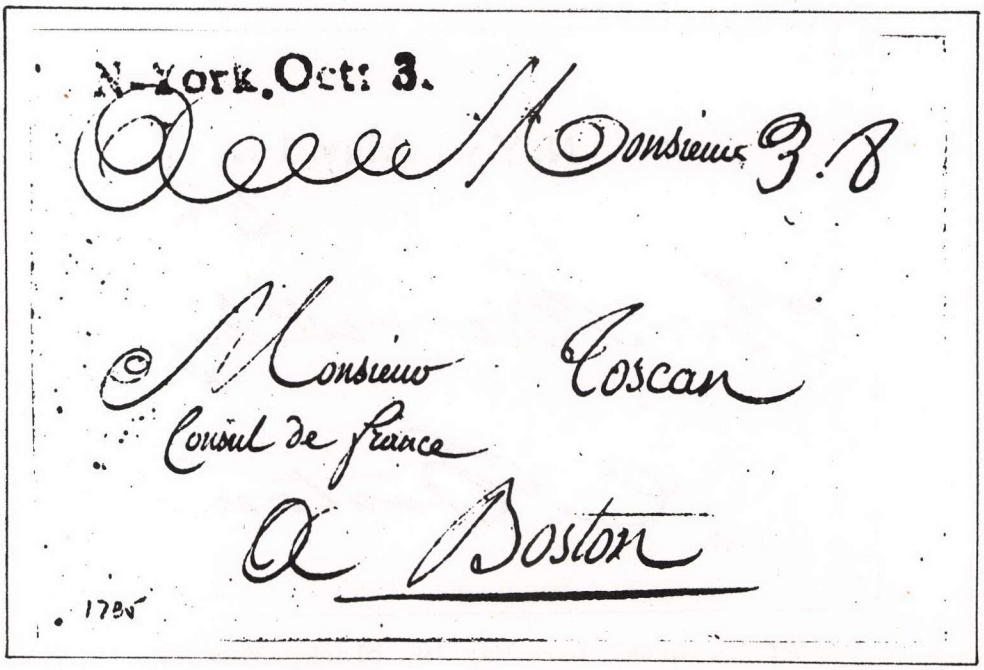


NY 15. N(ew)*York, greenish blue, 24 x 4½, on reverse. On public Service, Free, greenish blue. Free, G.Washington. To Providence. (Clements Library, Ann Arbor).
July 15, 1776

NEW YORK

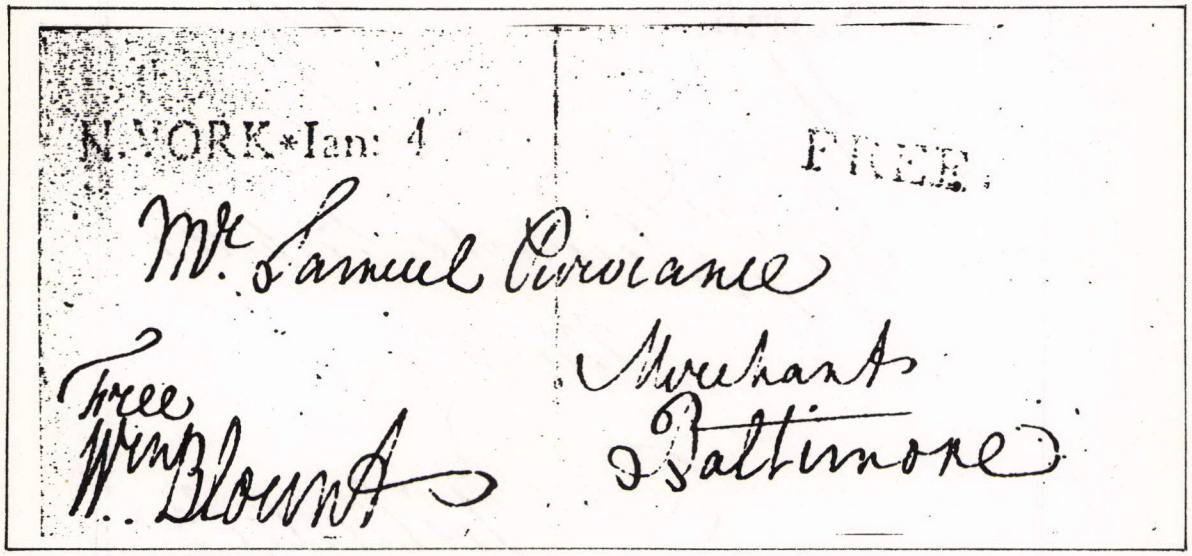


NY 16. N(ew).Y(ork)*Mar(ch):5, black, 15 x 4½, 1784, to Philadelphia, 2 dwts. 1/ local currency. (Recorded by E.N.Sampson).

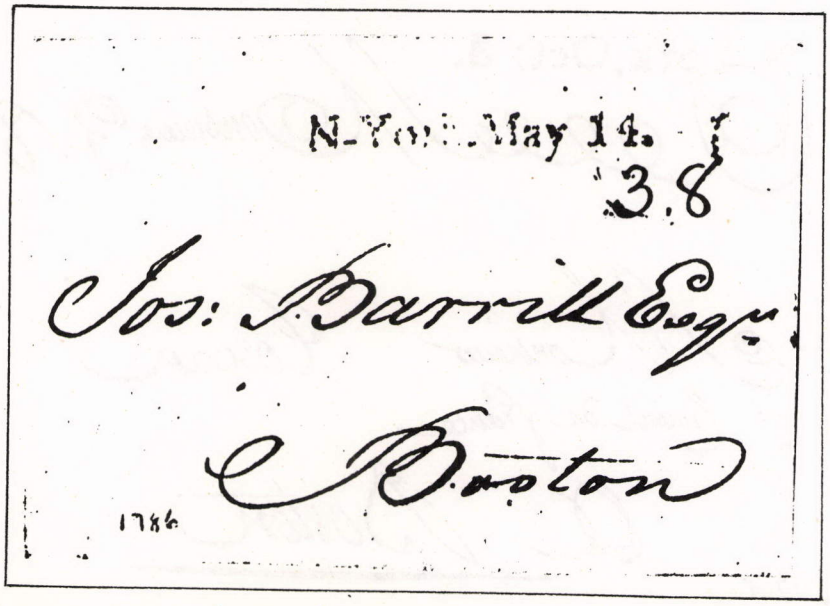


NY 17. N(ew)-York.Oct(ober): 3. black, 24 x 4½. To Boston, 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Siegel auction). 1785.

NEW YORK

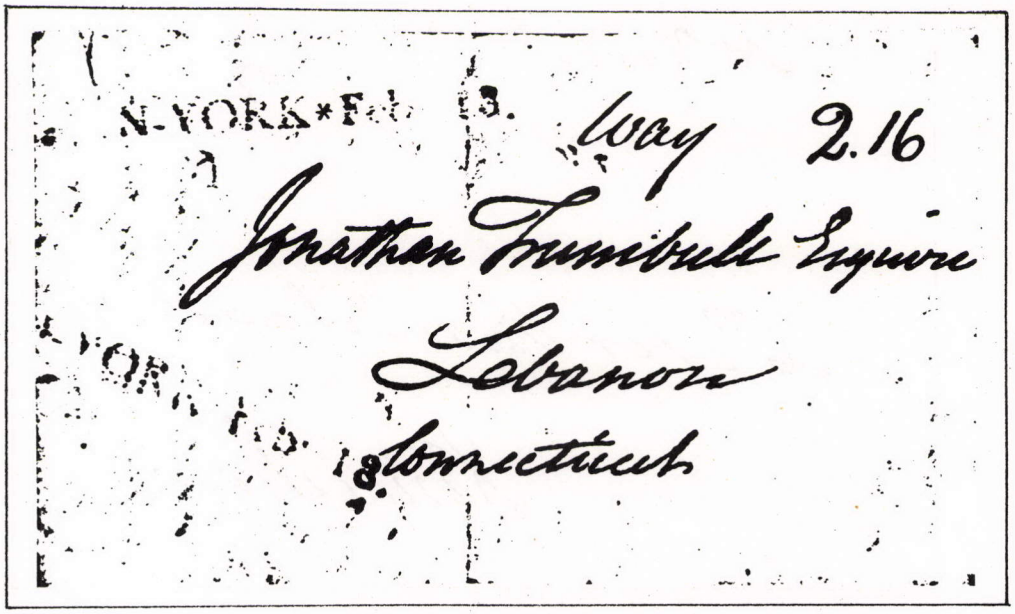


NY 18. N(EW). YORK Ian:4, black, 29 x 4½, 1786. FREE. Free Wm.Blount. To Baltimore. (Duke University Library, Purviance-Countney Papers).

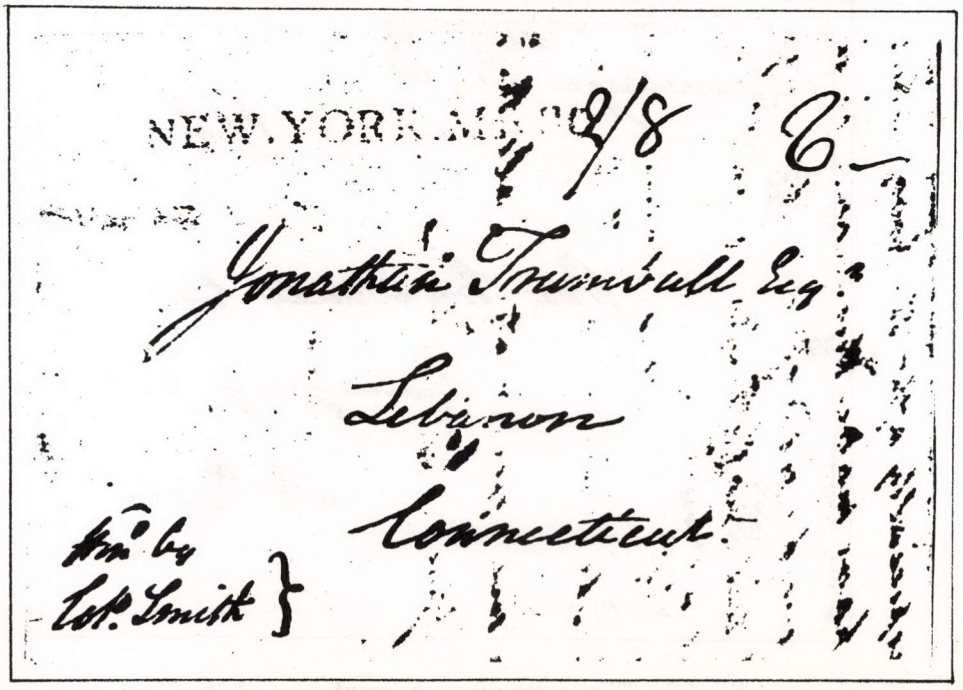


NY 19. N(ew)-York.May 14. black, 24 x 4½. 1786. To Boston. 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Siegel auction).

NEW YORK

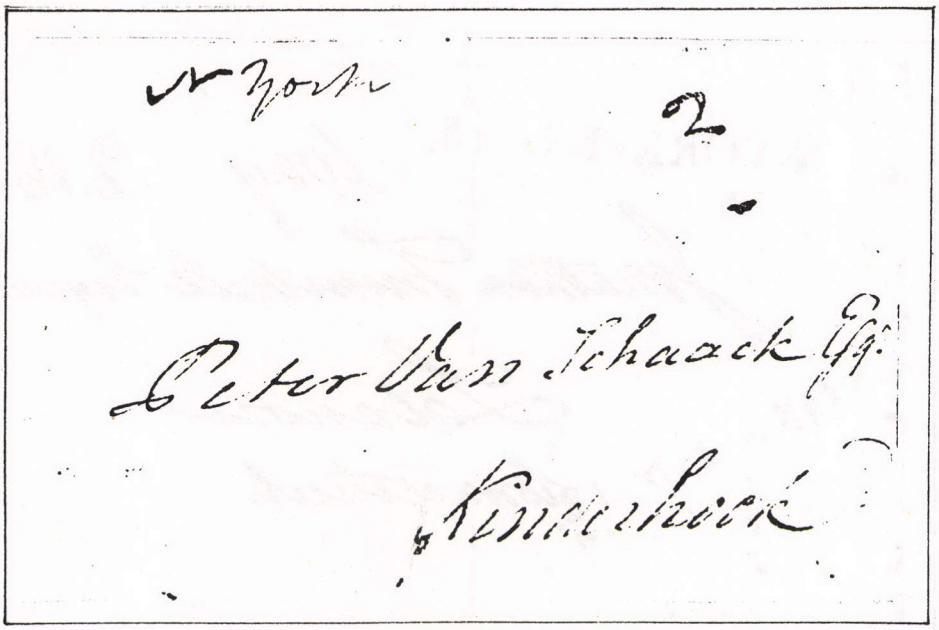


NY 20. N(ew)-YORK*Feb. 13. black, 29 x 4½, 1787. From London, December 27, 1786 to Lebanon, Conn. Way 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Yale University Library).

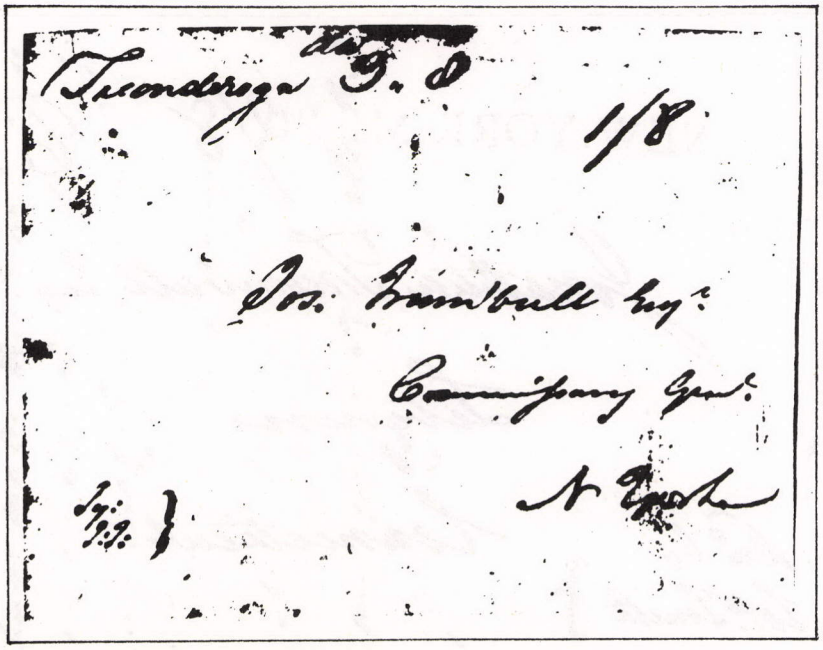


NY 21. NEW.YORK.May 30, black, 38 x 5, from London, March 28, 1788, to Lebanon. 6 dwts. 2/8 local currency. (Yale University Library).

NEW YORK

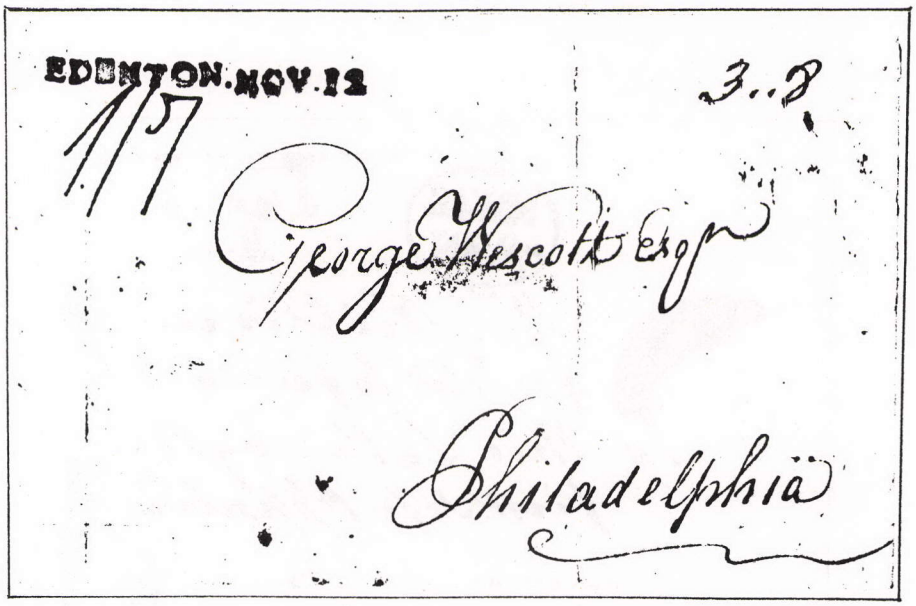


NY 22. N(ew) York. June 19, 1788. To Kinderhook N.Y. 2 dwts. (Siegel auction).

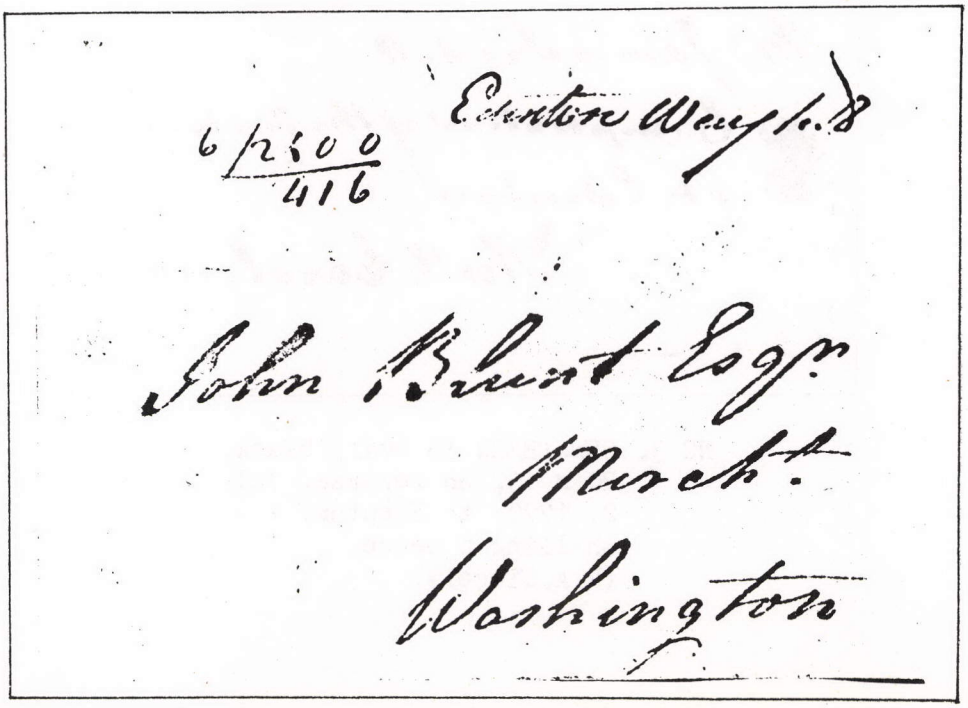


NY 23. Ticonderoga. August 2, 1776. To New York. 3 dwts, 8 gr. 1/8 local currency. (Connecticut Historical Society).

NORTH CAROLINA

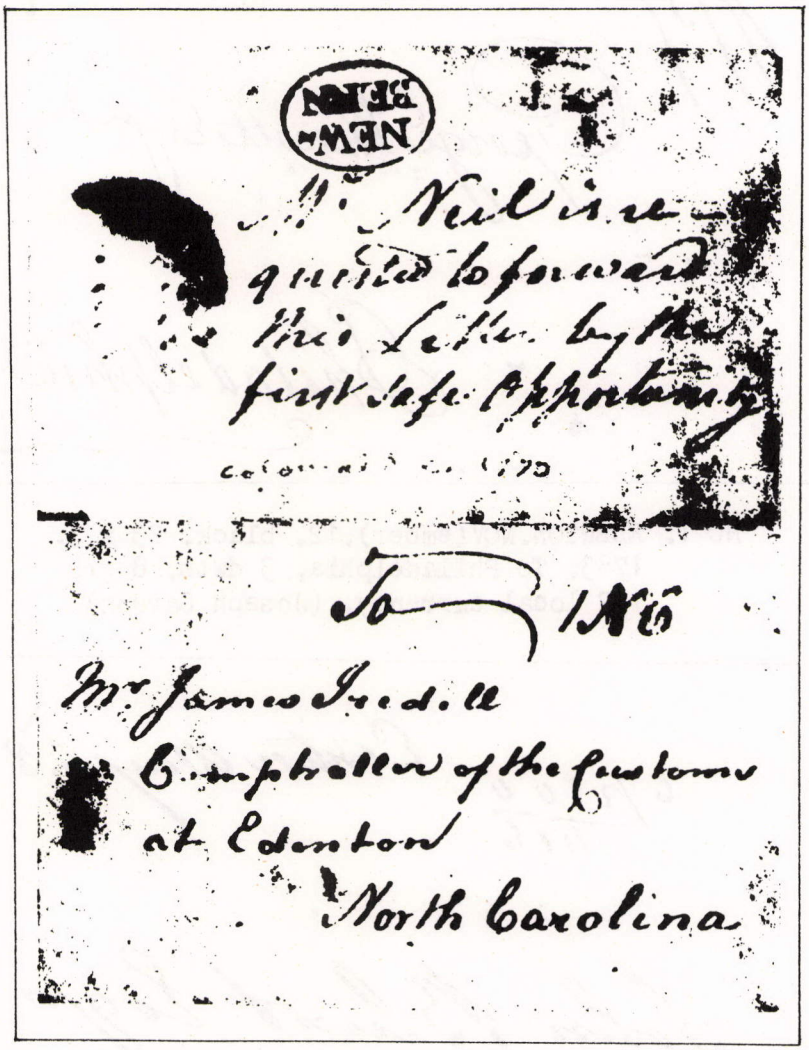


NC 1. EDENTON.NOV(ember),12, black, 23 x 3. 1783. To Philadelphia, 3 dwts, 8 gr. 1/7 local currency. (Joseph Carson).



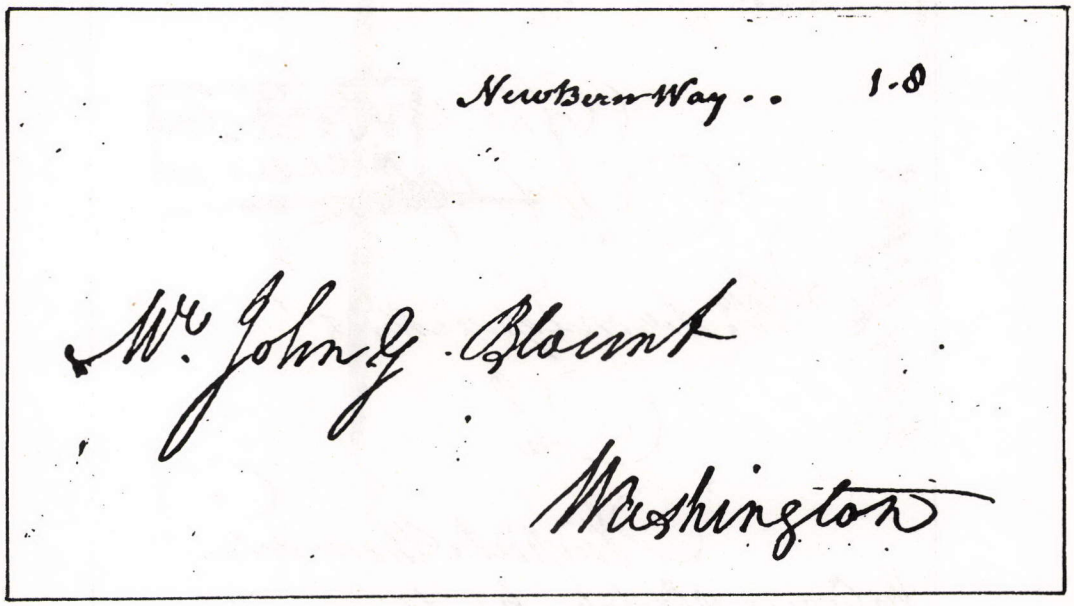
NC 2. Edenton, January, 1787. Way 1 dwt, 8 gr. to Wasnington, N.C. (North Carolina State Archives).

NORTH CAROLINA

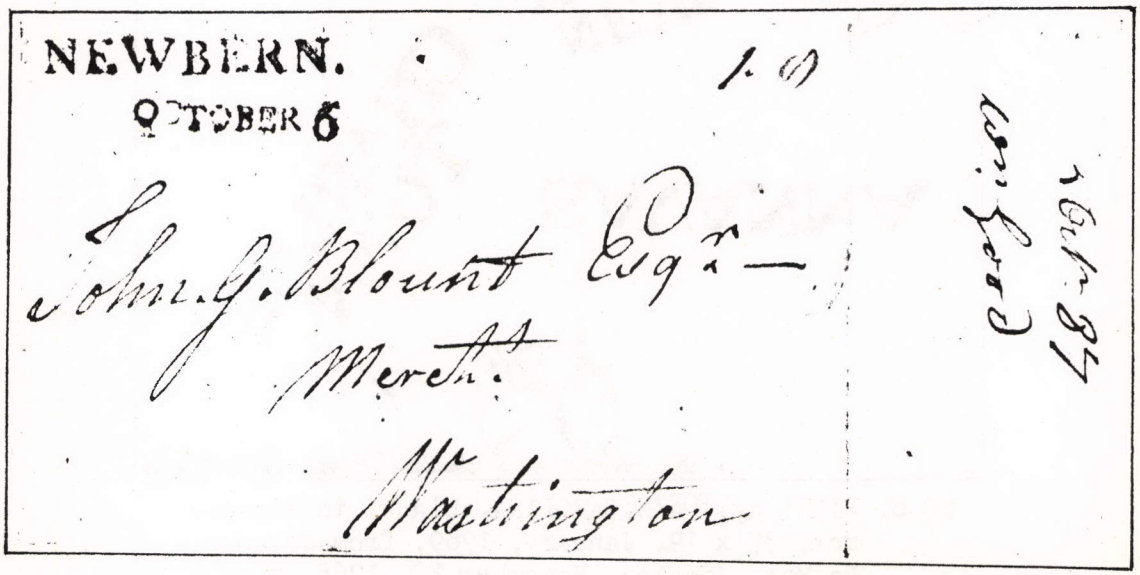


NC 3. NEW-/BERN in oval, black, 20 x 15, on reverse. July 2, 1770, to Edenton. 1 shilling 6 pence. (R.A.Siegel).

NORTH CAROLINA

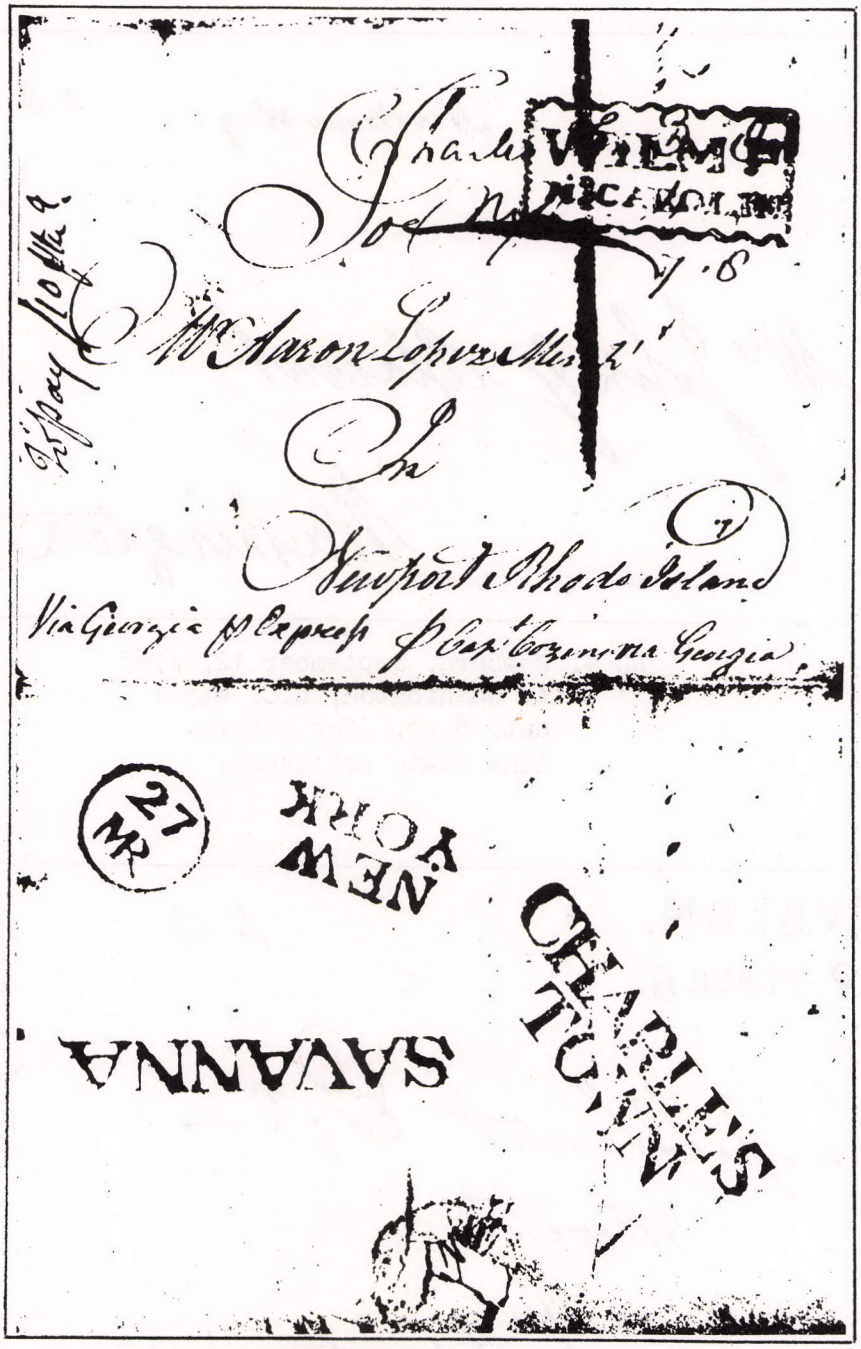


NC 4. NewBern, September 12, 1783 to Washington, N.C. Way 1 dwt, 8 gr. (North Carolina State Archives).



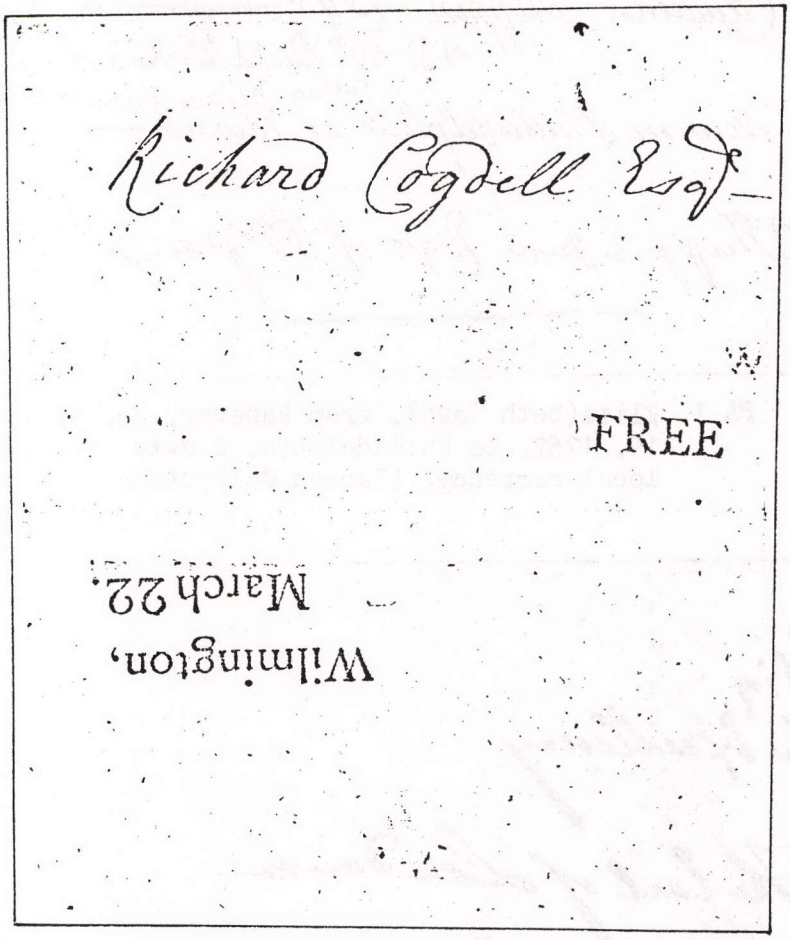
NC 5. NEWBERN, black, 39 x 5, OCTOBER 6, 1787 to Washington, N.C. Rated 1 dwt. 8 gr. (North Carolina State Archives).

NORTH CAROLINA



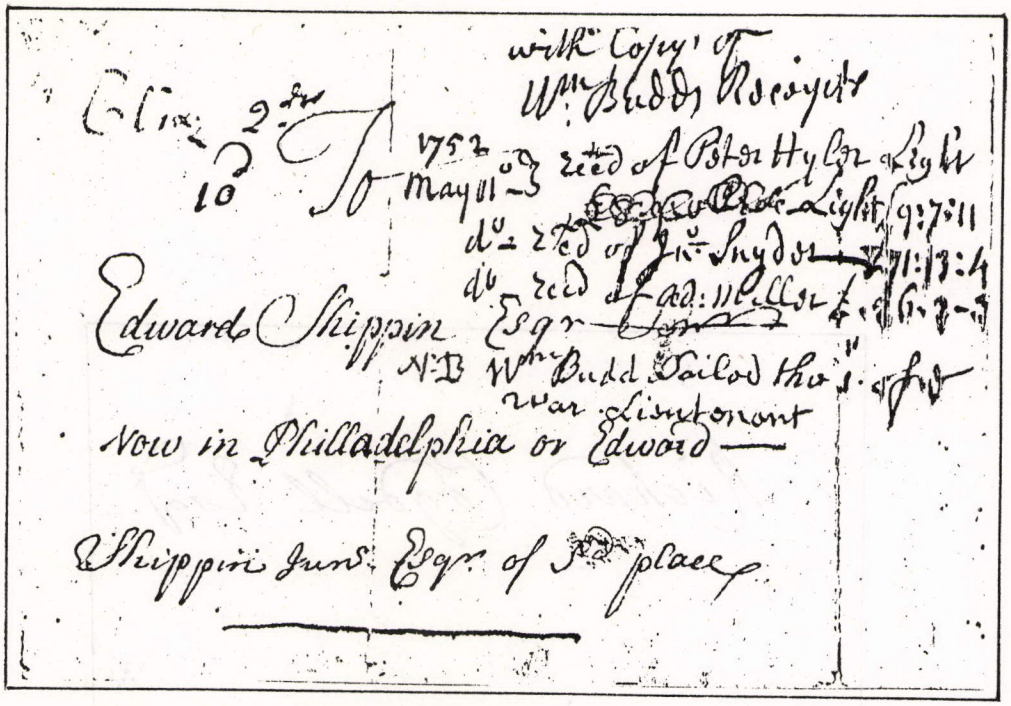
NC 6. WILM(ing)TON/N.CAROLINA, black, in sinuous box, 37 x 19. January, 1769, from Savanna La Mar, Jamaica, November 28, 1768, via SAVANNA (black, 51 x 6), CHARLES/TOWN (black,47 x 15), NEW/YORK (black, 24 x 12) to Newport. Rated Charlestown 3 dwts, 8 gr., New York 4 dwts. (Newport Historical Soc.)

NORTH CAROLINA

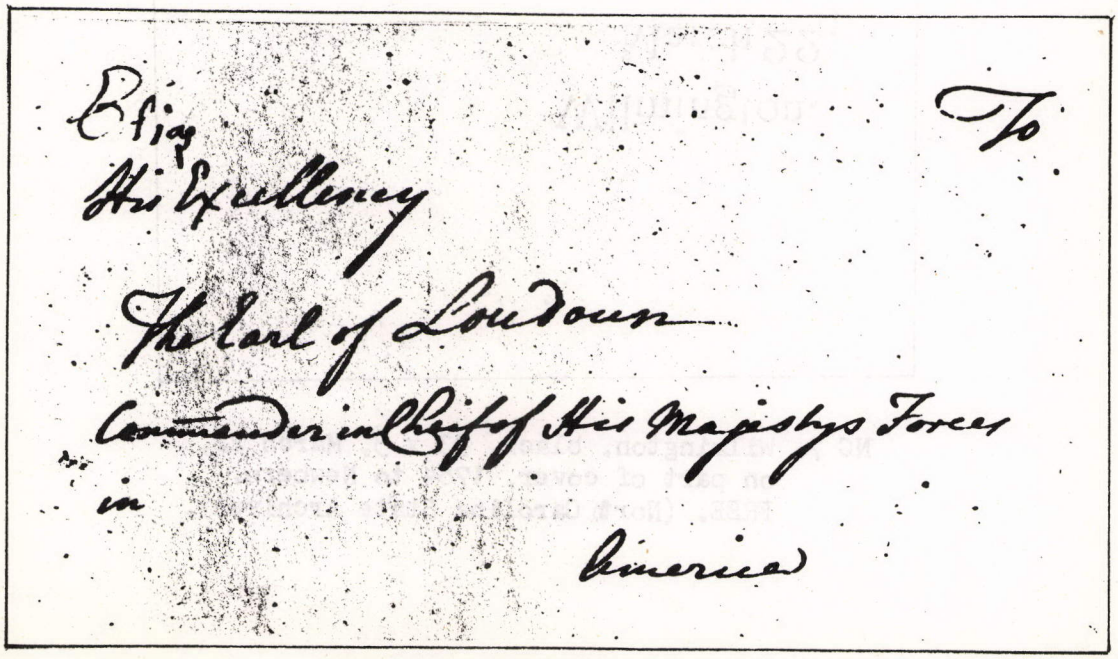


NC 7. Wilmington, black, 33 x 3, March 22, on part of cover, 1784 to Newbern. FREE. (North Carolina State Archives).

PENNSYLVANIA

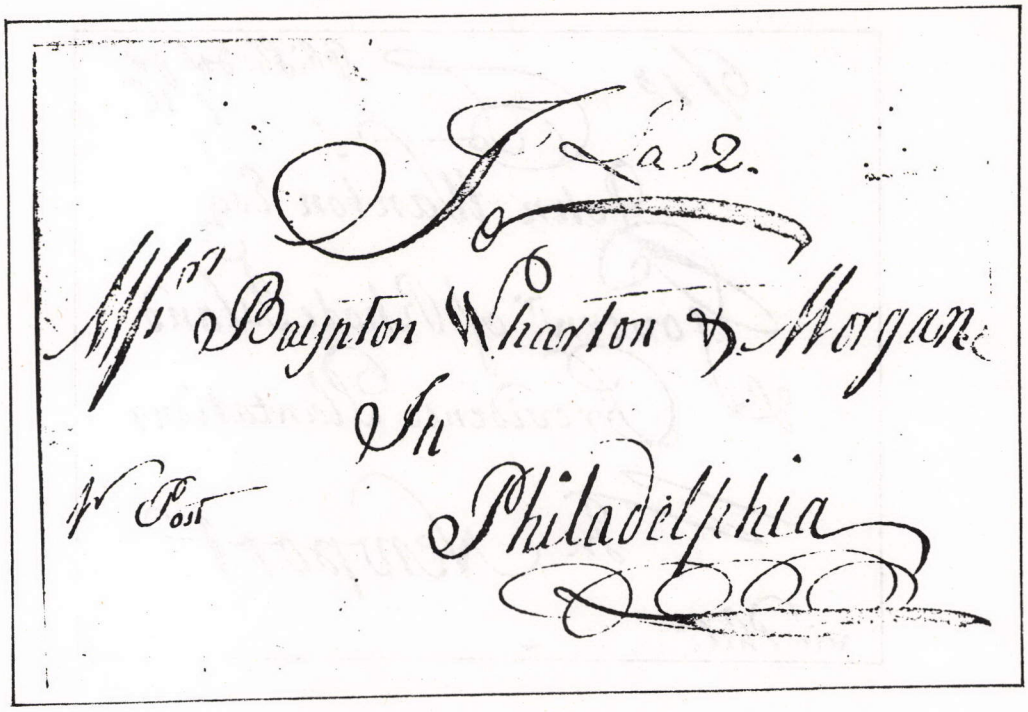


PA 1. Eliza(beth Town), from Hanover, Pa. April 19, 1757, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts. 10 d. local currency. (Carson Collection).

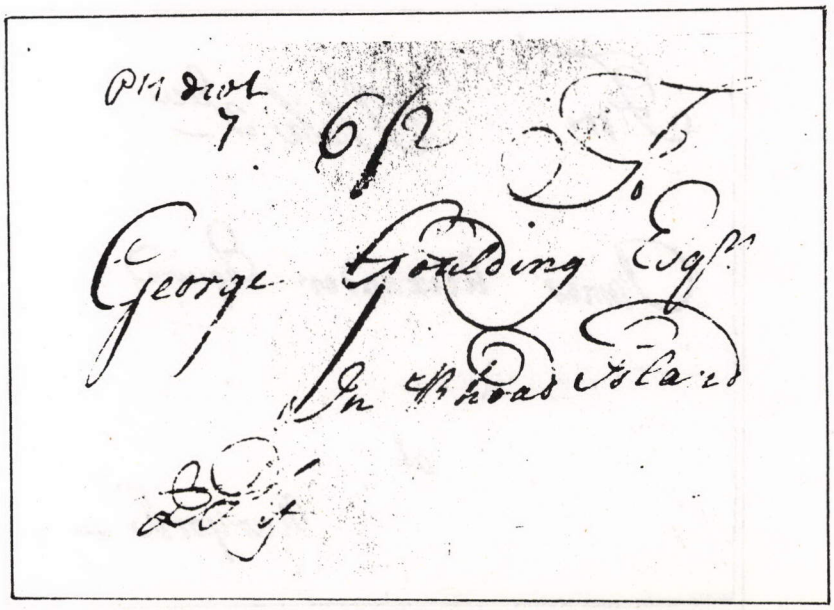


PA 2. Eliz(abeth Town), September 7, 1757, to (New York). (Huntington Library, San Marino).

PENNSYLVANIA

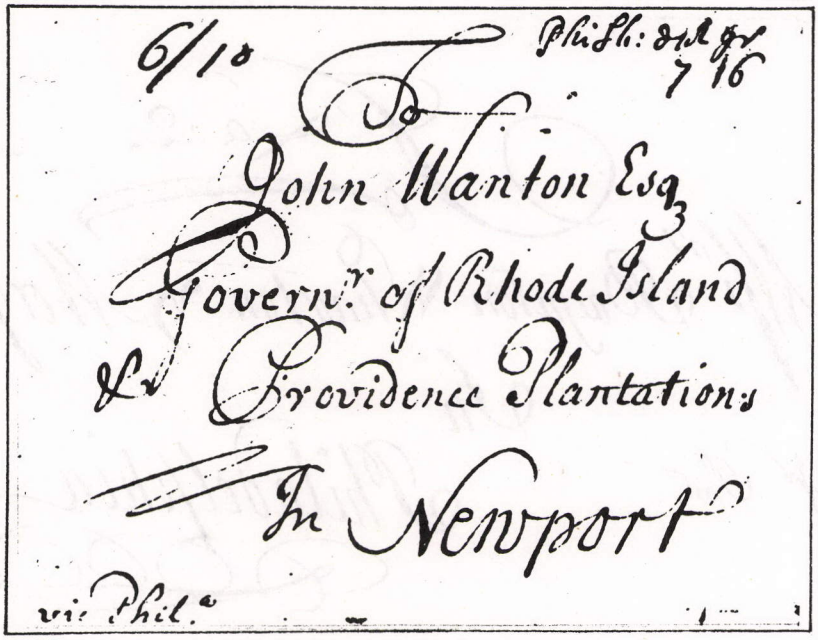


PA 3. La(ncaster), from Carlisle, Pa. July 9, 1768, 2 dwts. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

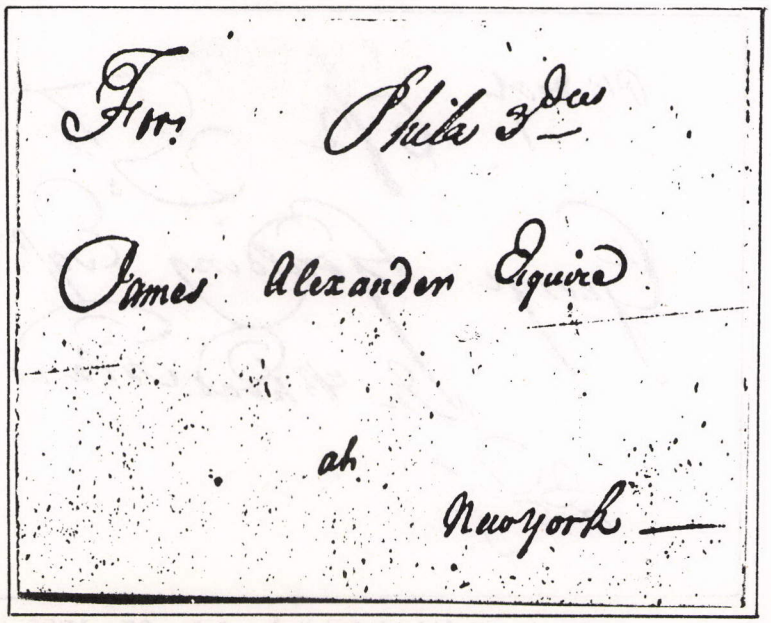


PA 4. Ph(iladelphia), July 27, 1733, to Rhode Island (Newport). 7 dwts. 6/2 local currency. Q.D.G. (Newport Historical Society).

PENNSYLVANIA

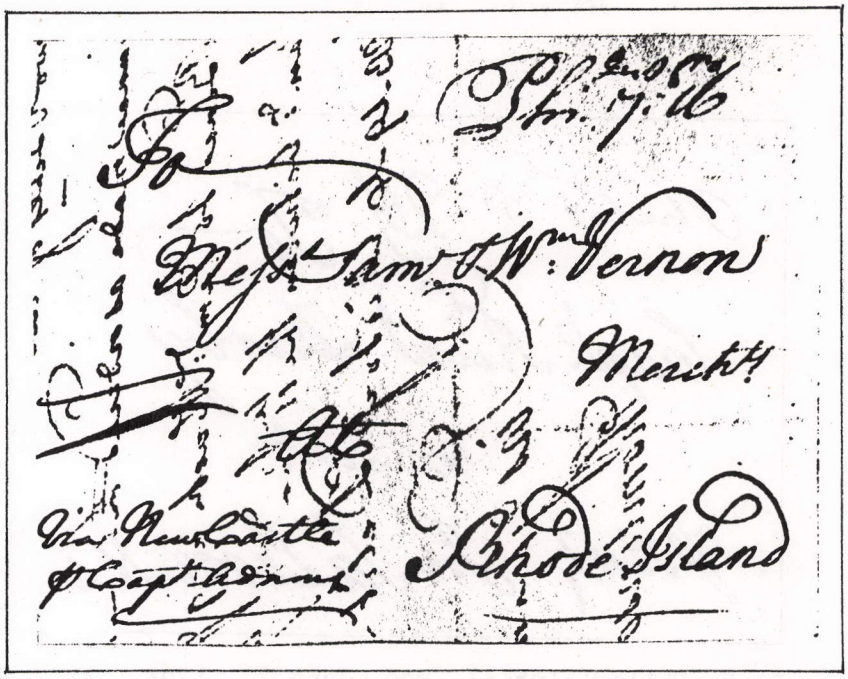


PA 5. Phi(ladelphia), red, from London, July 29, 1734, to Newport. Ship Letter, 7 dwts, 16 gr. 6/10 local currency. (R.Isl. State Arch.)

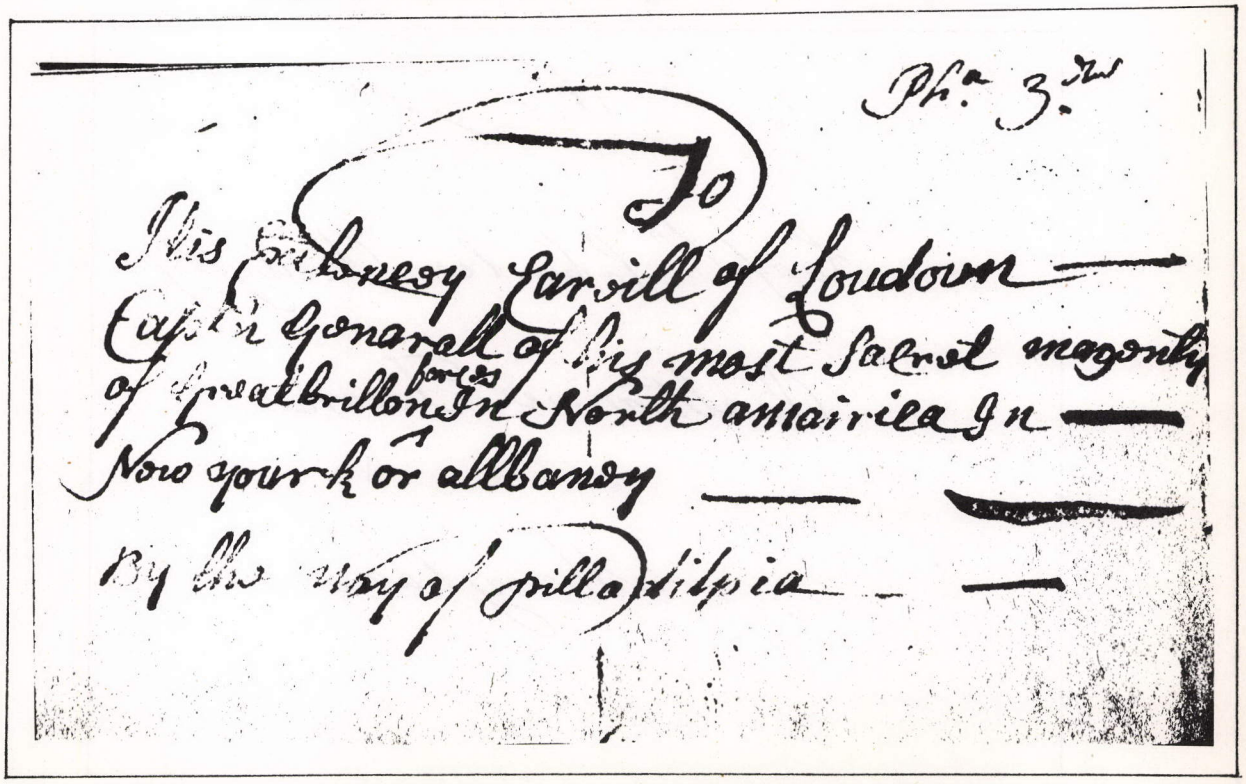


PA 6. Phila(delphia), June, 1743, to New York, 3 dwts. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

PENNSYLVANIA

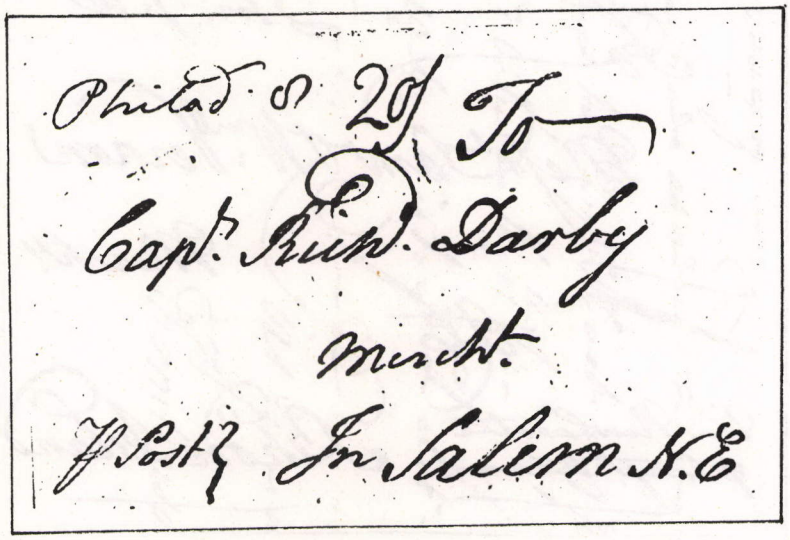


PA 7. Phi(ladelphia), April 29, 1754, from London, December 20, 1753, via Newcastle, Engl. Under cover to Philadelphia, forwarded to Newport. 7 dwts, 16 gr.

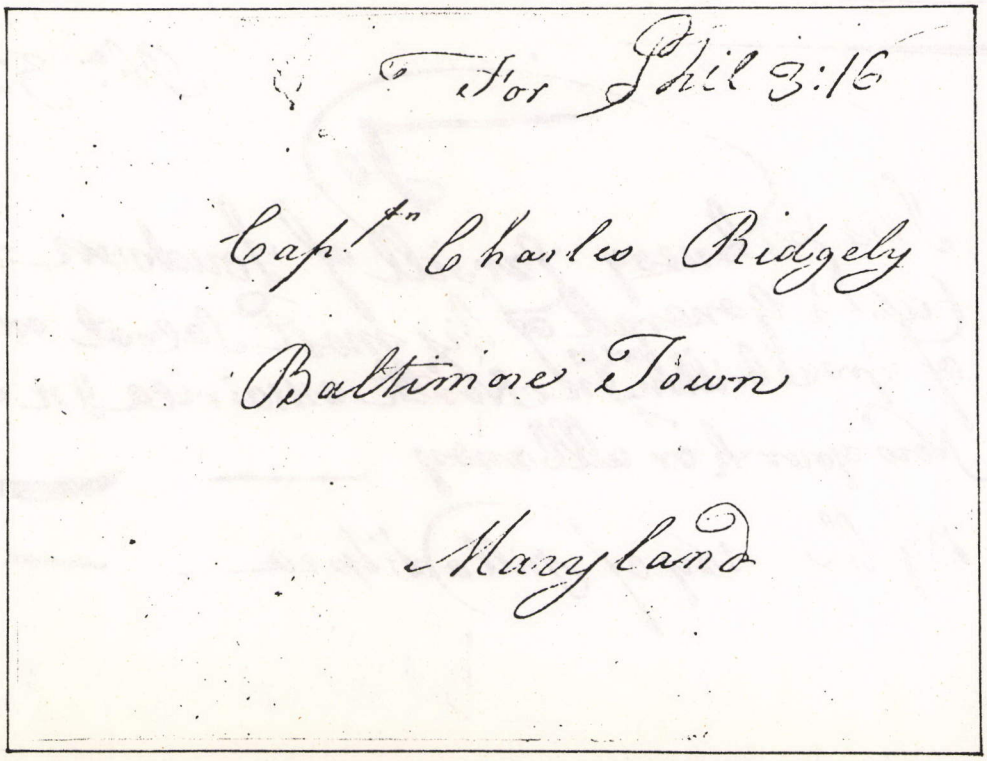


PA 8. Ph(iladelphi)a from Charleston, Maryland, April 2, 1757, to New York or Albany. Delivered in New York. 3 dwts. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

PENNSYLVANIA

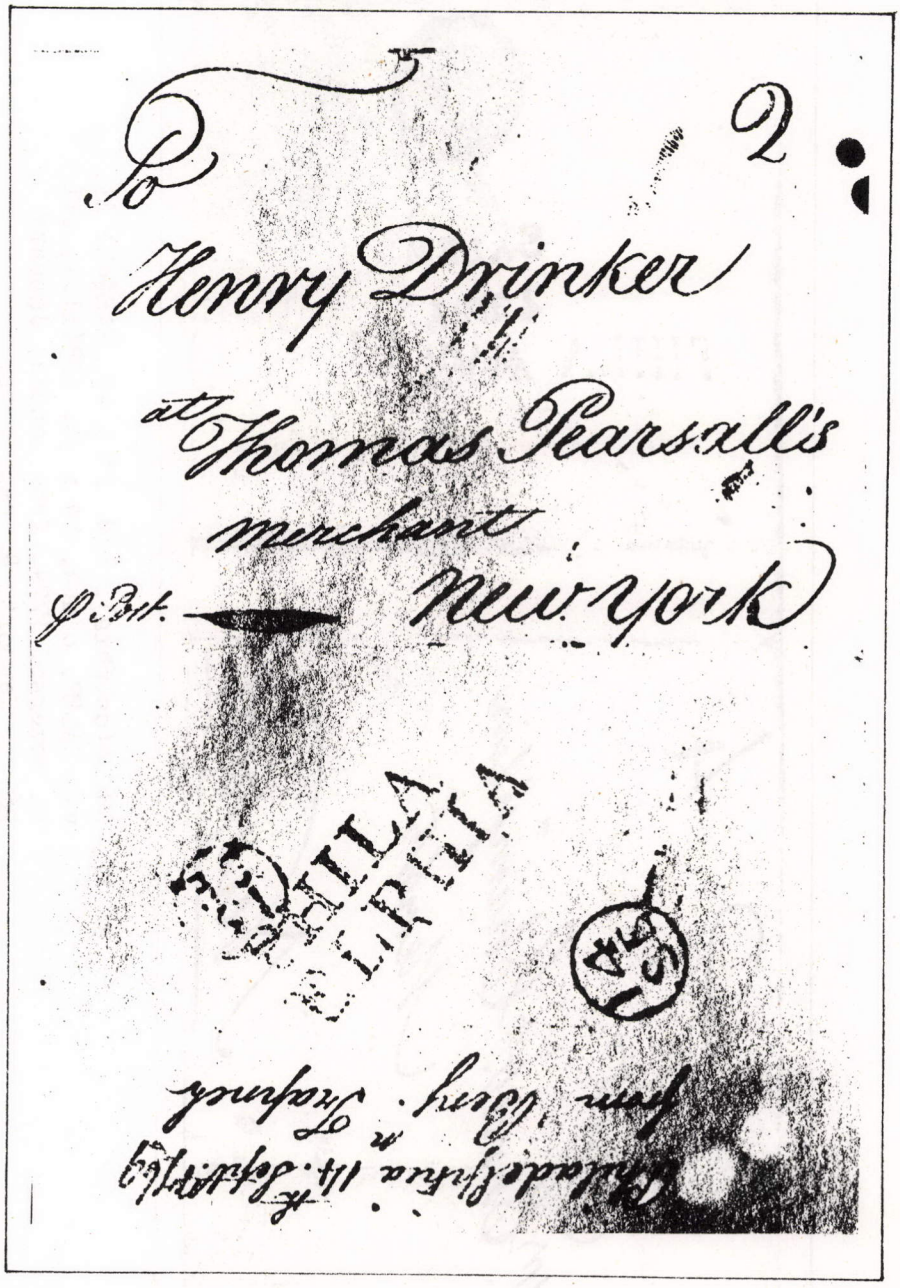


PA 9. Philad(elphia), red, June 30, 1762, to Salem, Mass. 8 dwts. 2 shillings local currency. (Princeton University Library).

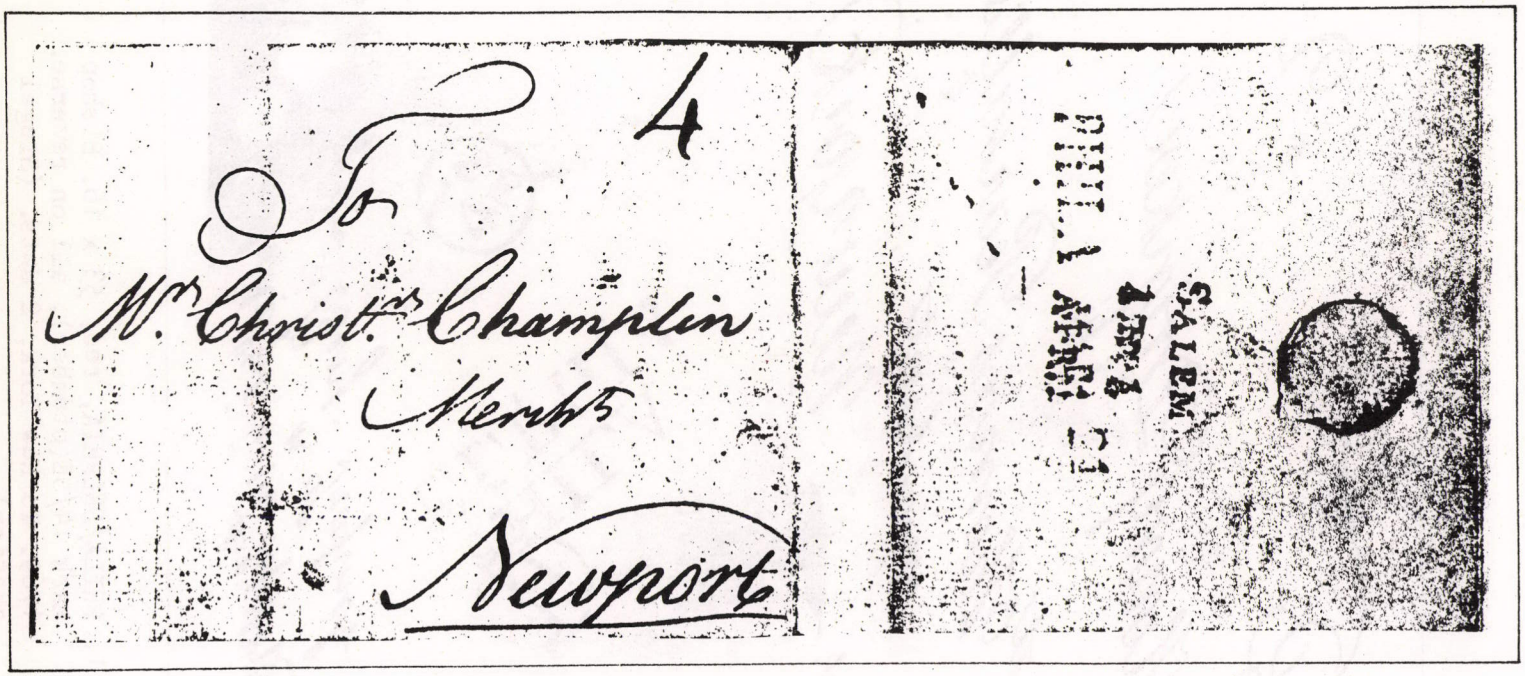


PA 10. Phil(adelphia), November 30, 1764, to Baltimore, 3 dwts, 16 gr. (Rev. D.Homer Kendall).

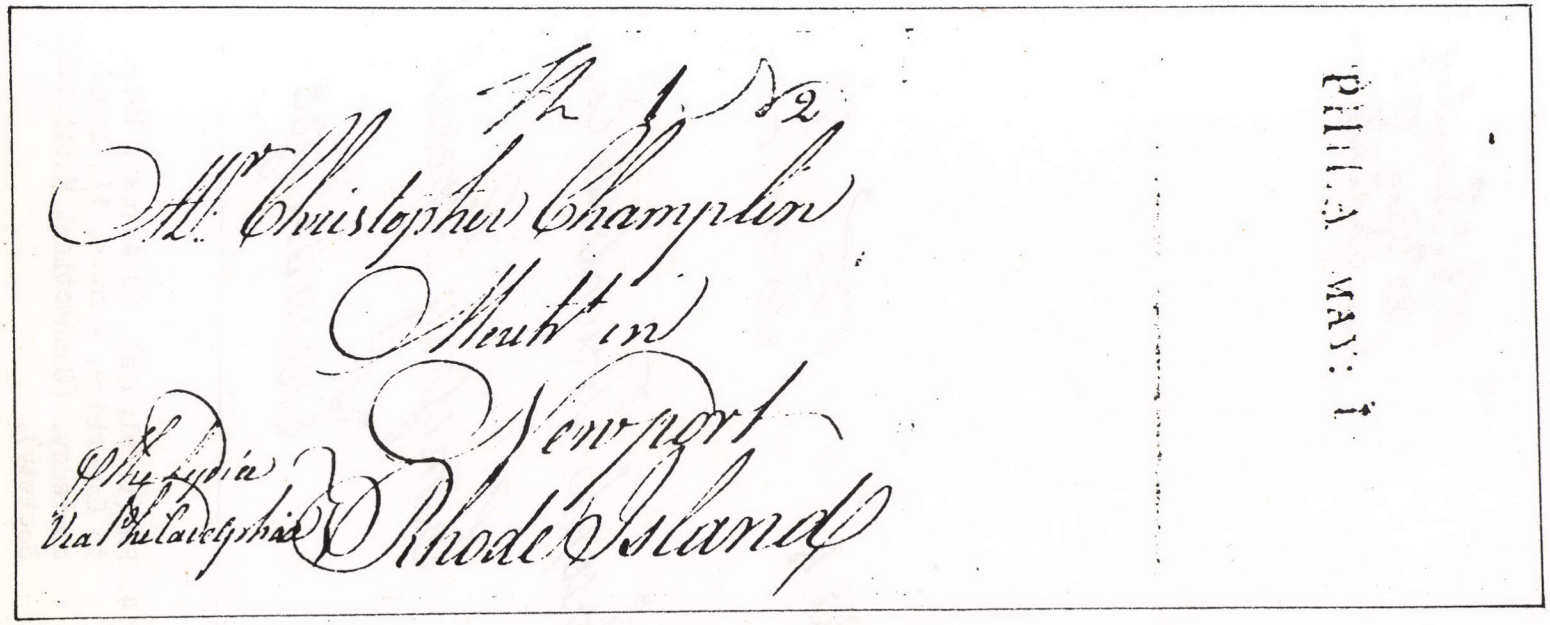
PENNSYLVANIA



PA 11. PHILA/DELPHIA, red, 53 x 16. Bishop mark 14/SE(ptember), all on reverse. 1769. To New York, 2 dwts. (Siegel auction).

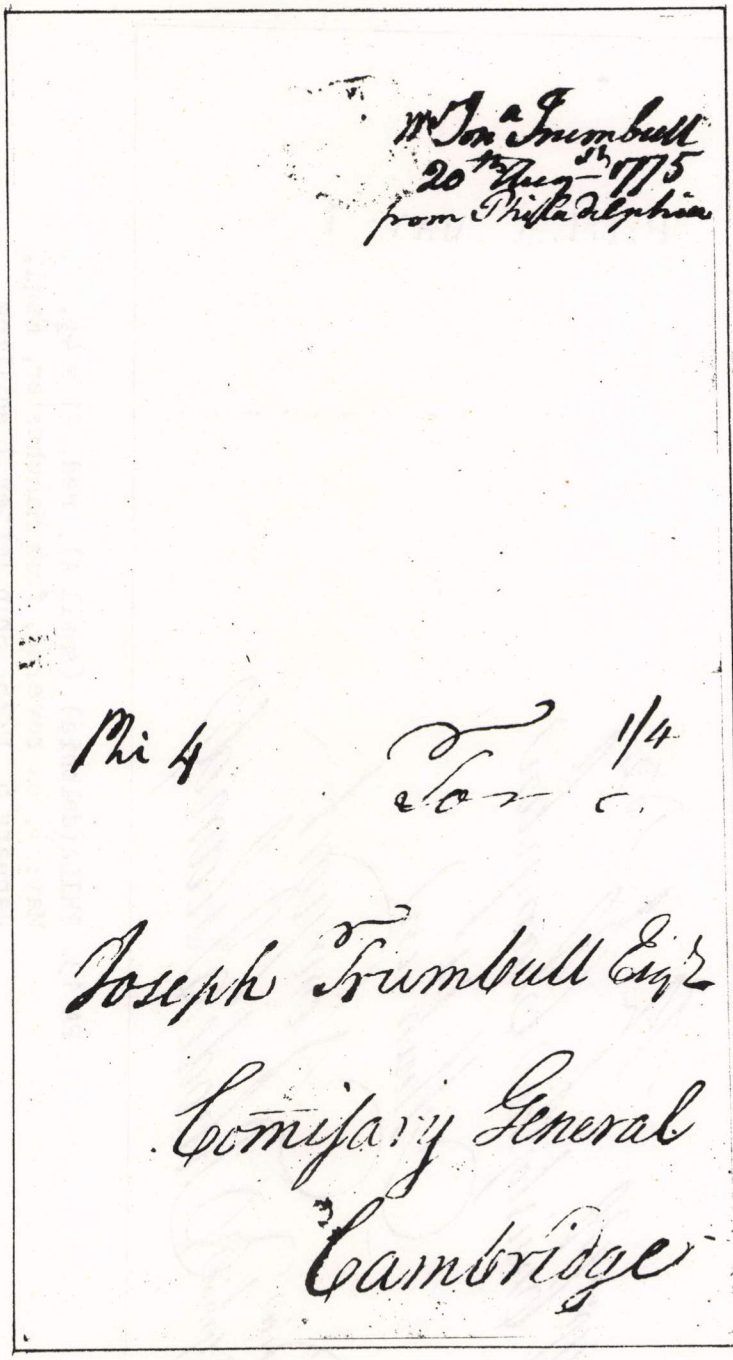


PA 12. PHILA(delphia), red, 21 x 4½, MAR(ch) 21, via SALEM, black, 19 x 5½, APR(il.1) all on reverse, 1774, from London, January 26, to Newport, 4, red, dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



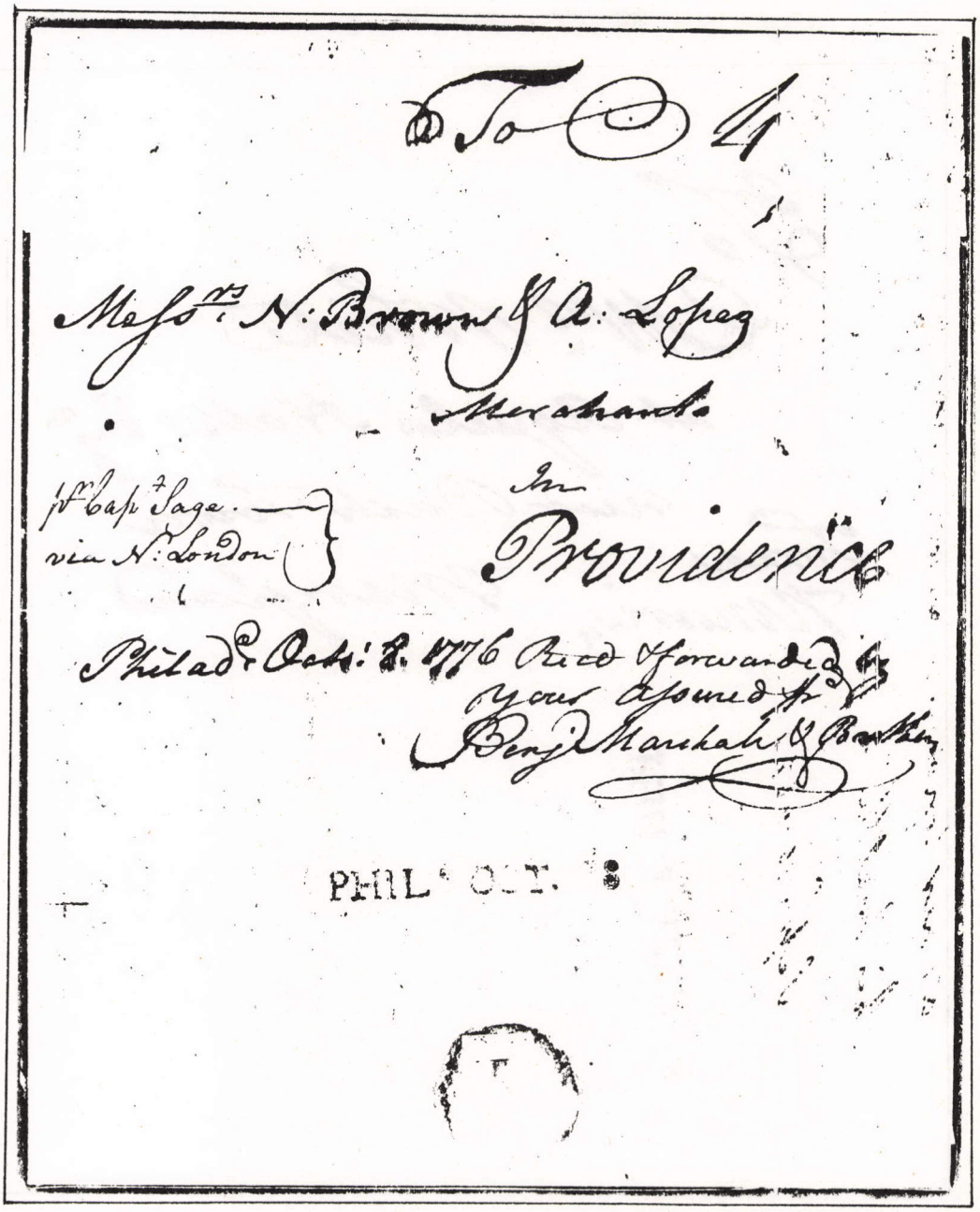
PA 13. PHILA(delphia) (small A), red, 21 x 4½, May: 1, on reverse, from Manchester, Engl. January 6, 1775. Ship letter 1 shilling, 2 pence, to Newport. (Massachusetts Historical Societ).

PENNSYLVANIA



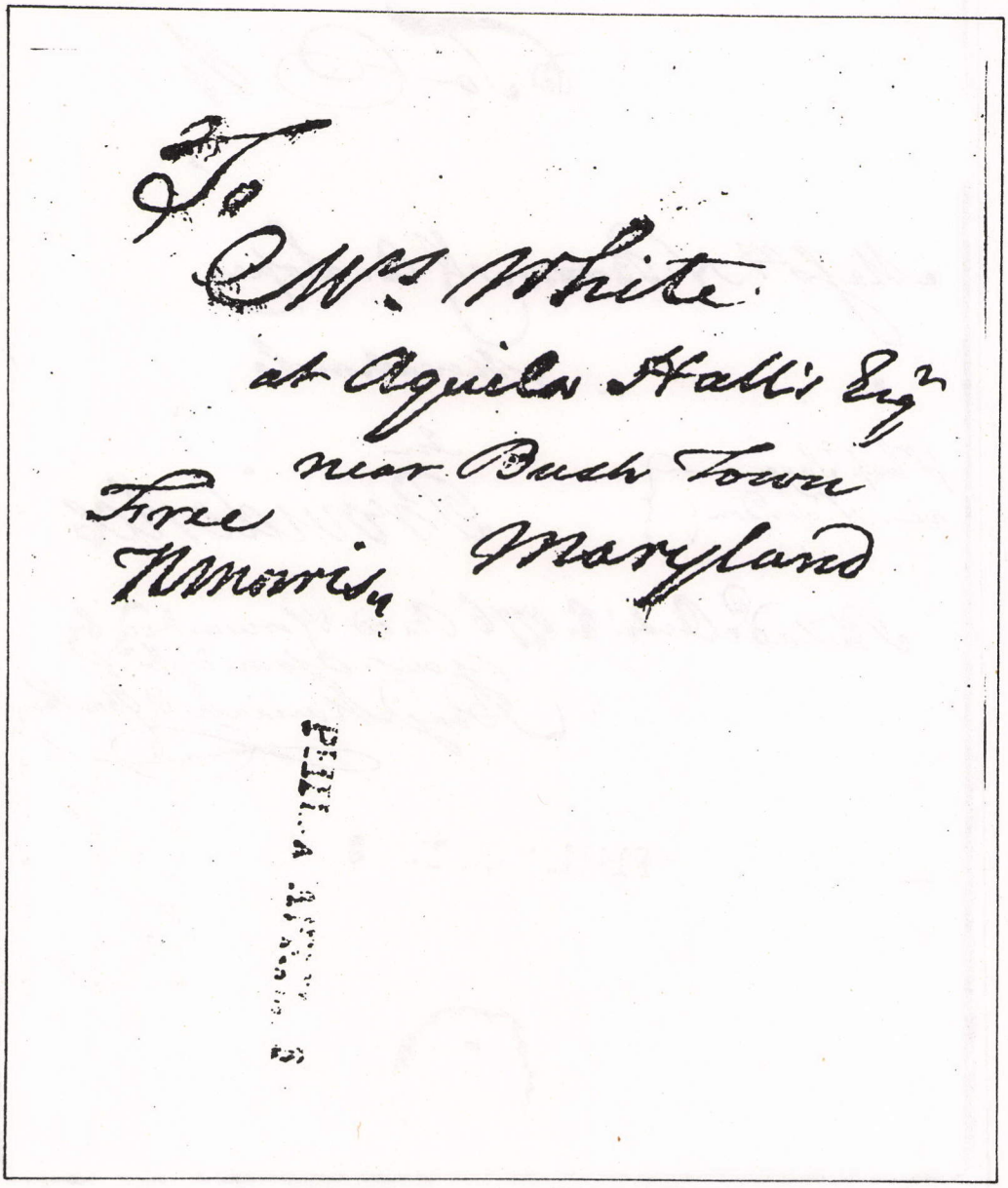
PA 14. Phi(ladelphia), 20 August, 1775, to Cambridge, 4 dwts, 1/4 local currency. (Connecticut Historical Society).

PENNSYLVANIA



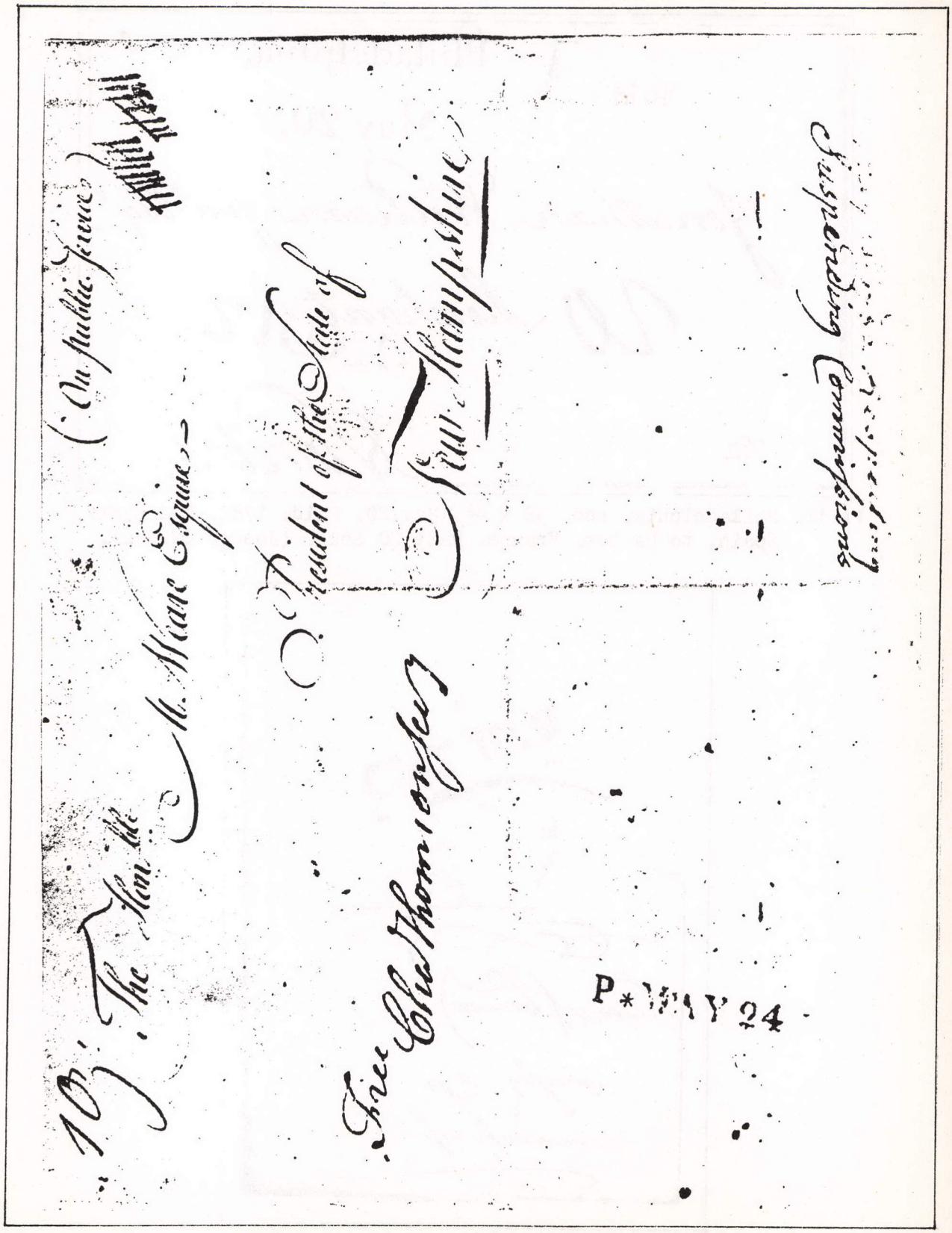
PA 15. PHILA(delphia), black, 17½ x 4, OCT(ober). 8, all on reverse. From Paramaribo, D.W.I. September 9, 1776, forwarded to Providence, rate 4 dwts. (Joseph Carson collection).

PENNSYLVANIA



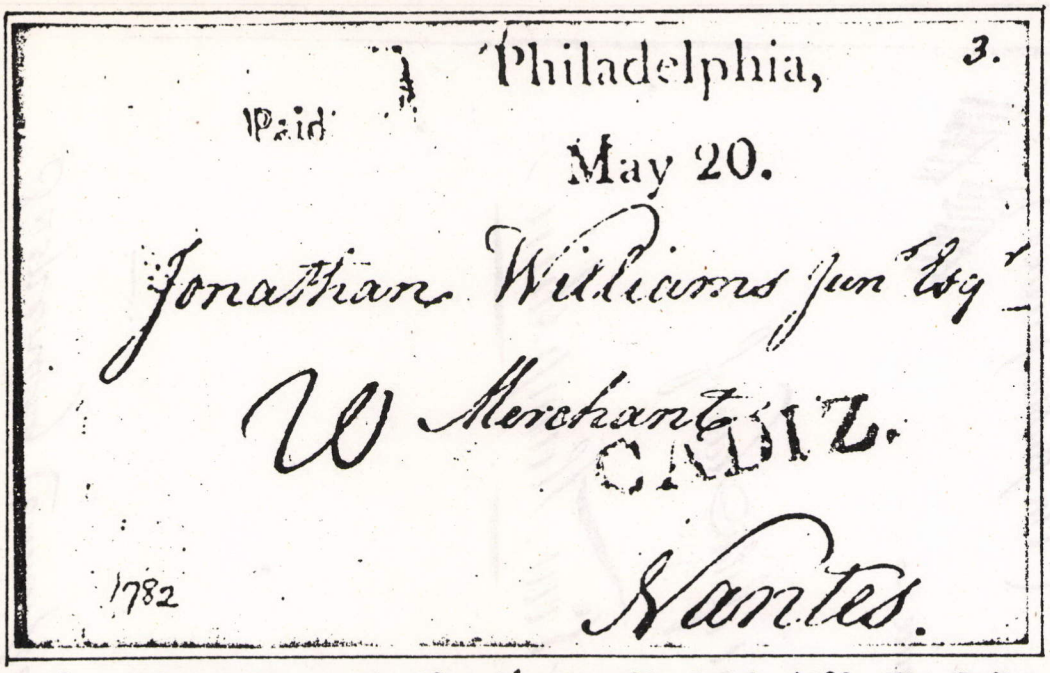
PA 16. PHILA(delphia) (A small), black, 19 x 4, APRIL 8, all on reverse. 1777. To Bushtown, Md. Free. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

PENNSYLVANIA

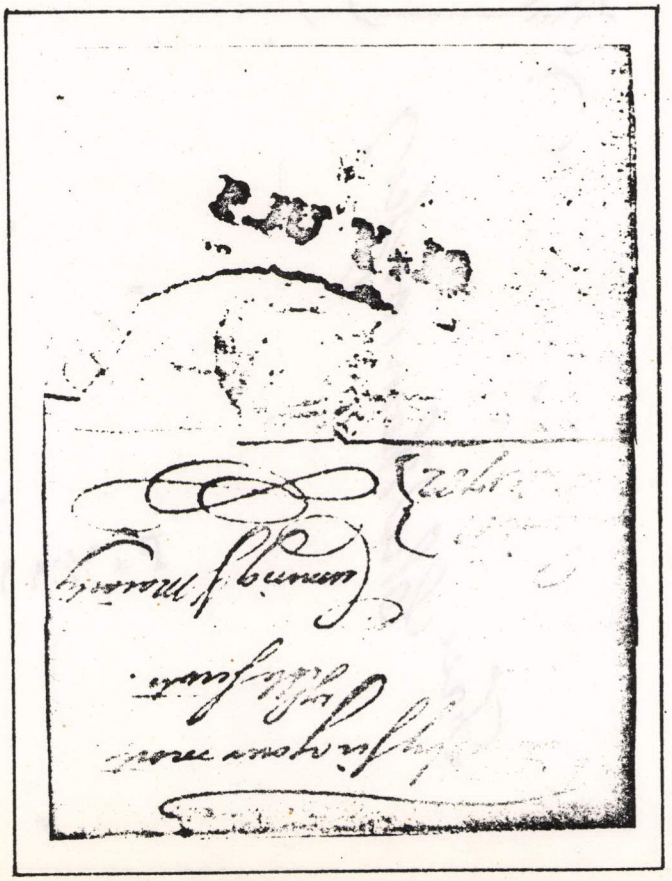


PA 17. P(hiladelphia)*, 6½ x 4½. MAY 24, all on reverse. 1782. Free. (Massachusets Historical Society).

PENNSYLVANIA

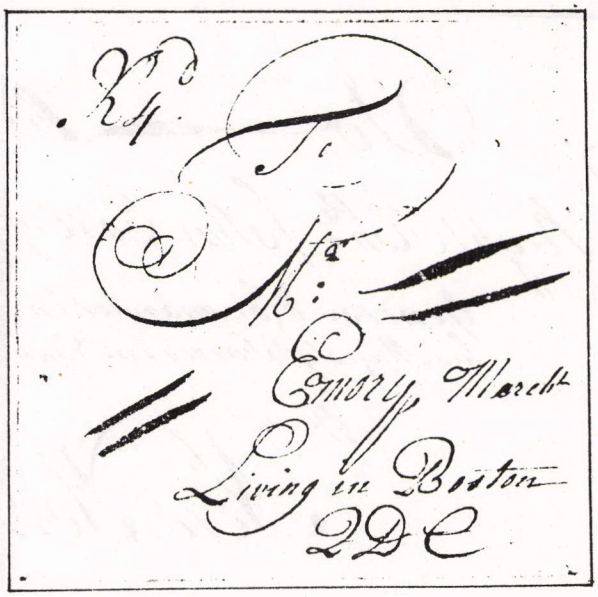


PA 18. Philadelphia, red, 38 x 4½, May 20. Paid. 1782. Via Cadiz, Spain, to Nantes, France. Rate 20 sous. (Joseph Carson).

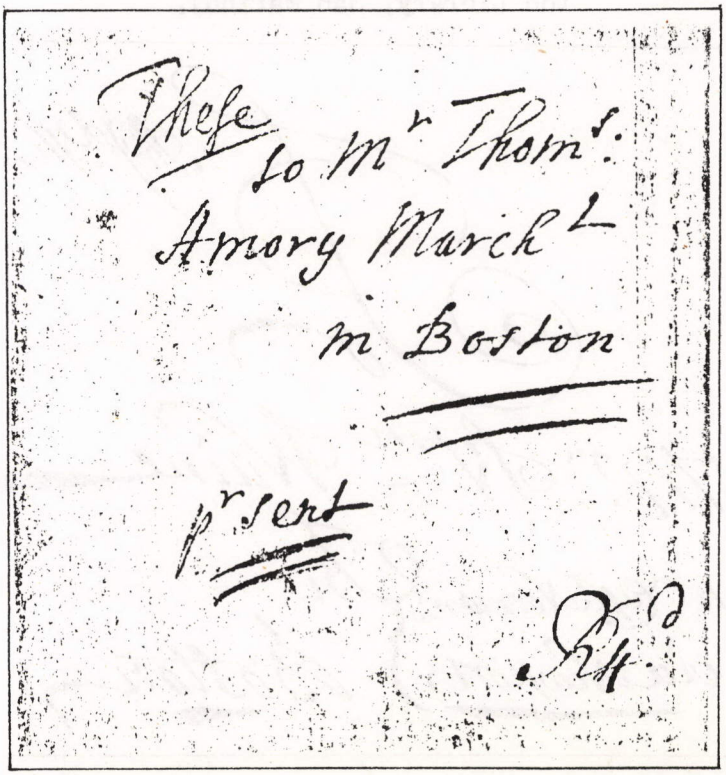


PA 19. P(hiladelphia)., black, 4½ x 5. From France via l'Orient, April 18, 1782. On reverse of part of cover. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

RHODE ISLAND

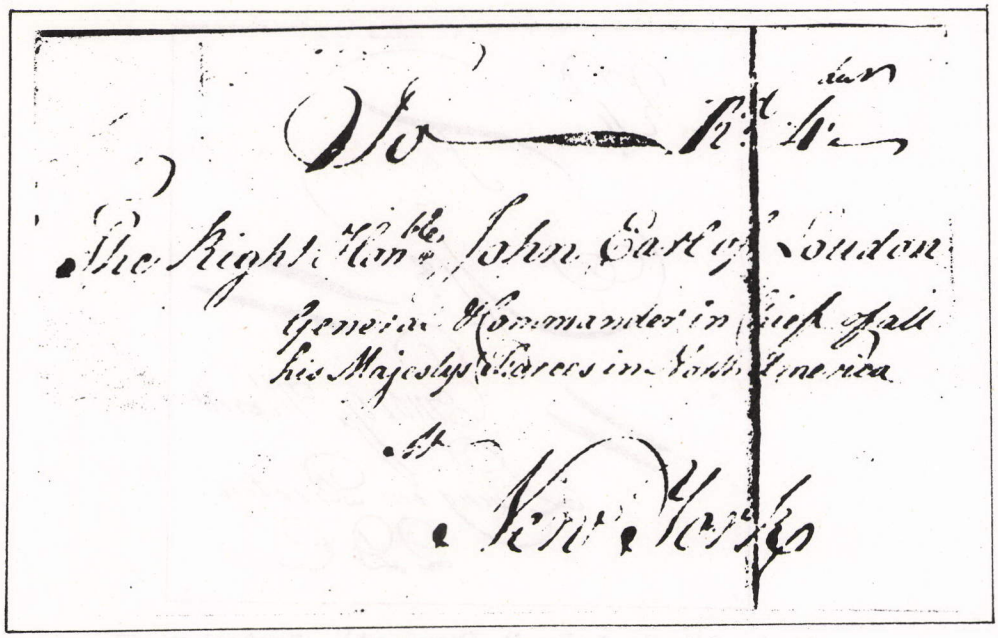


RI 1. R(hode Island) (Newport), September 29, 1721, to Boston, October 2. Q.D.C. 4 d. (J.H.Smith, Providence).

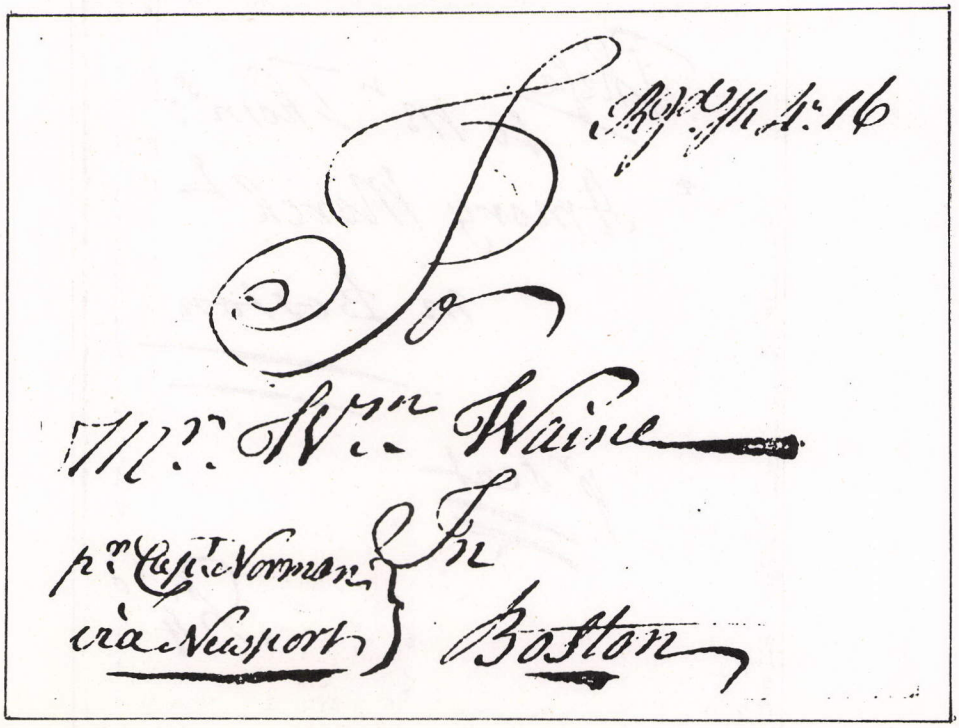


RI 2. R(hode Island) (Newport), March 7, 1722. To Boston, 4 d. (Library of Congress).

RHODE ISLAND

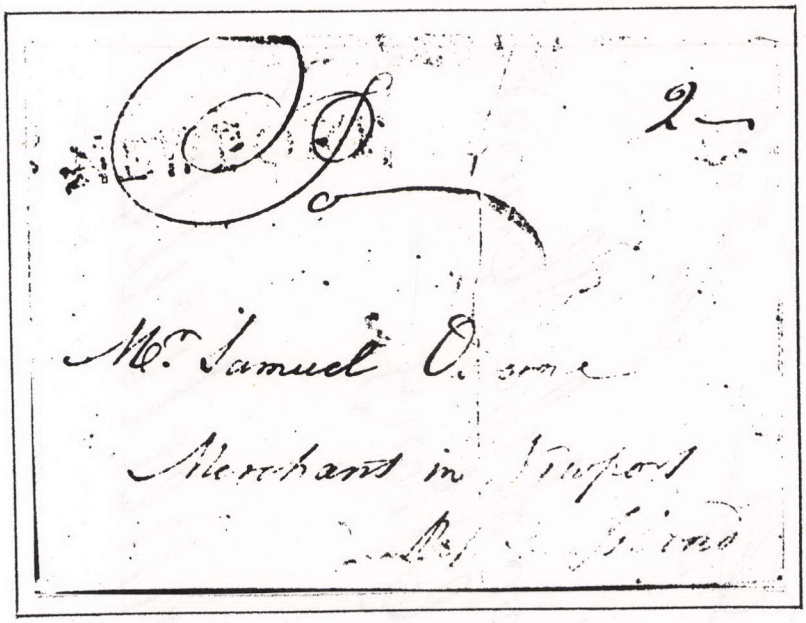


RI 3. R(hode Islan)d (Newport), December 6, 1756, to New York, 4 dwts. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

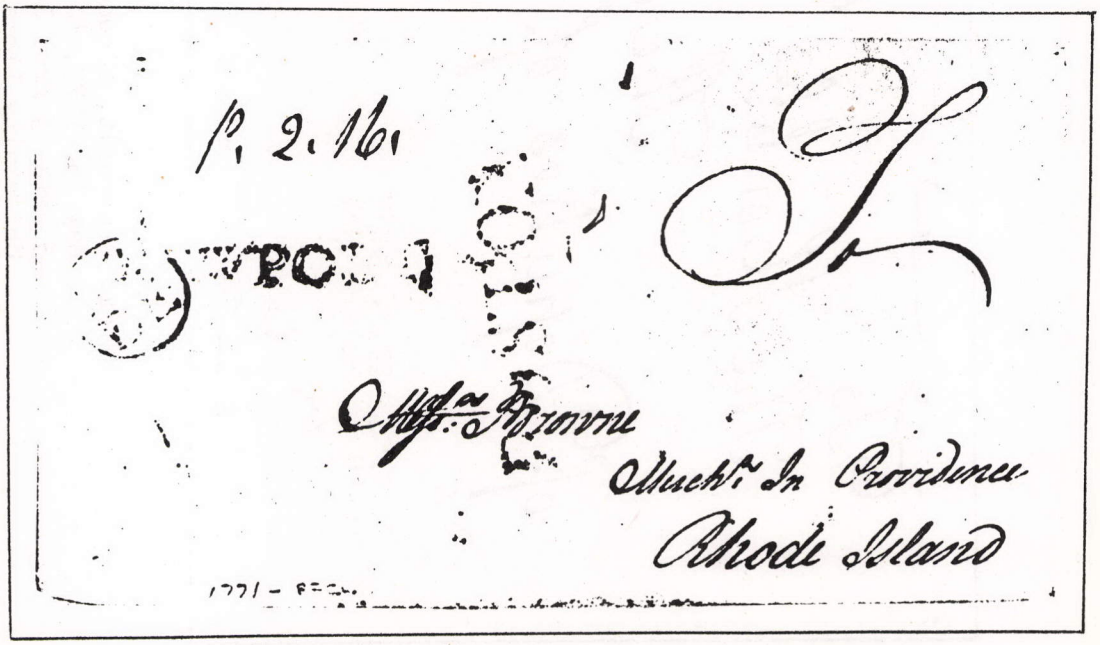


RI 4. R(hode) I(slan)d (Newport), from St. Christopher, B.W.I. February 4, 1760, to Boston. Ship letter 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Don Knee, Warwick).

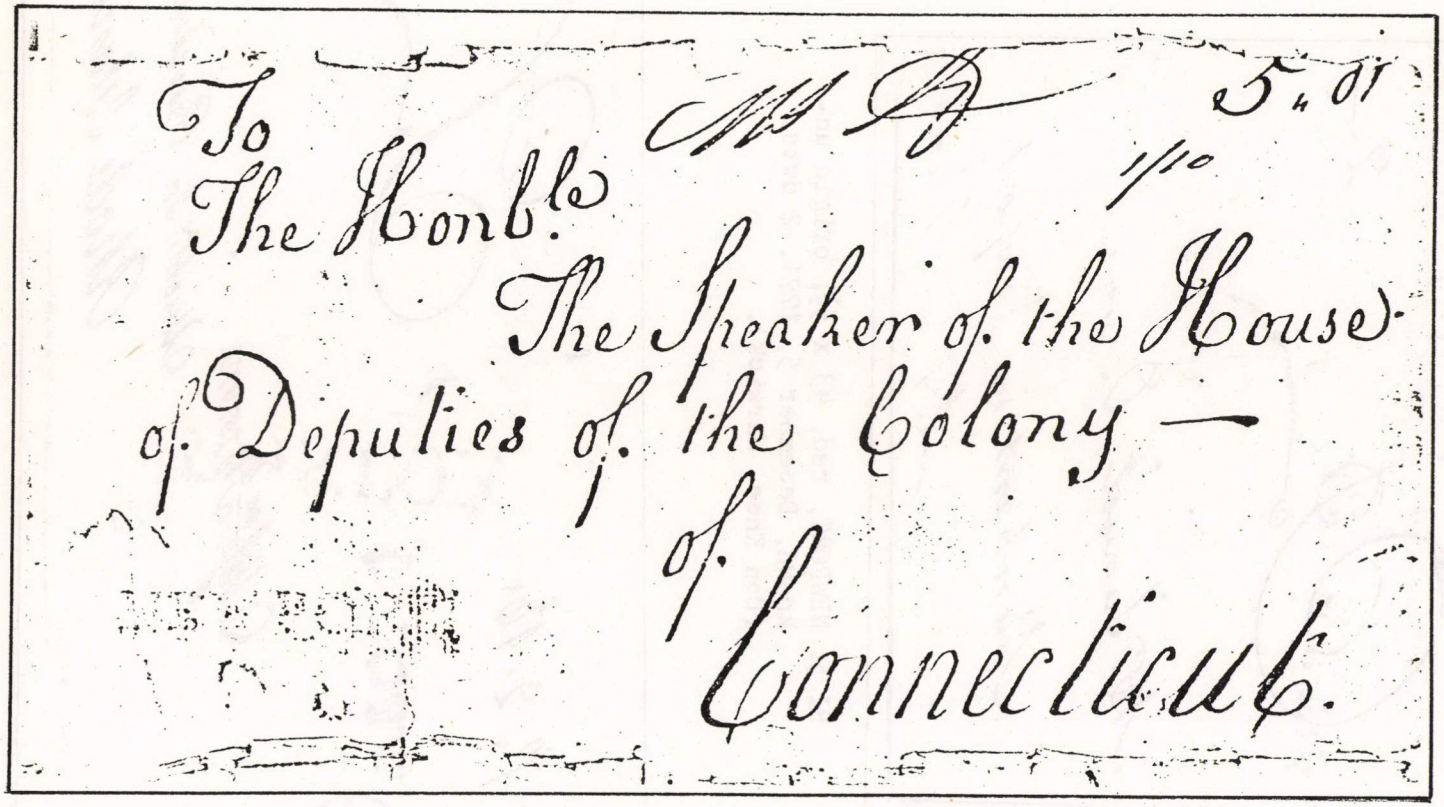
RHODE ISLAND



RI 5. NEWPORT, red, 43 x 5½, origin unknown, December 5, 1771. 2 dwts. (Don Knee, Warwick).

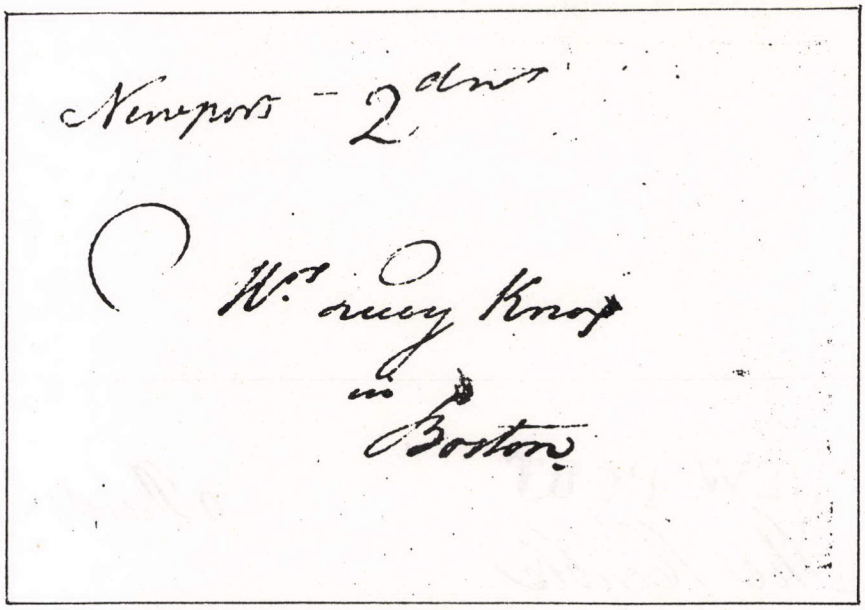


RI 6. NEWPORT (small W), red, 42 x 4½, from BOSTON, red, 43½ x 7½. Bishop mark 22/DE(cember), 1771. P(aid) 2 dwts, 16 gr. (Don Knee, Warwick).

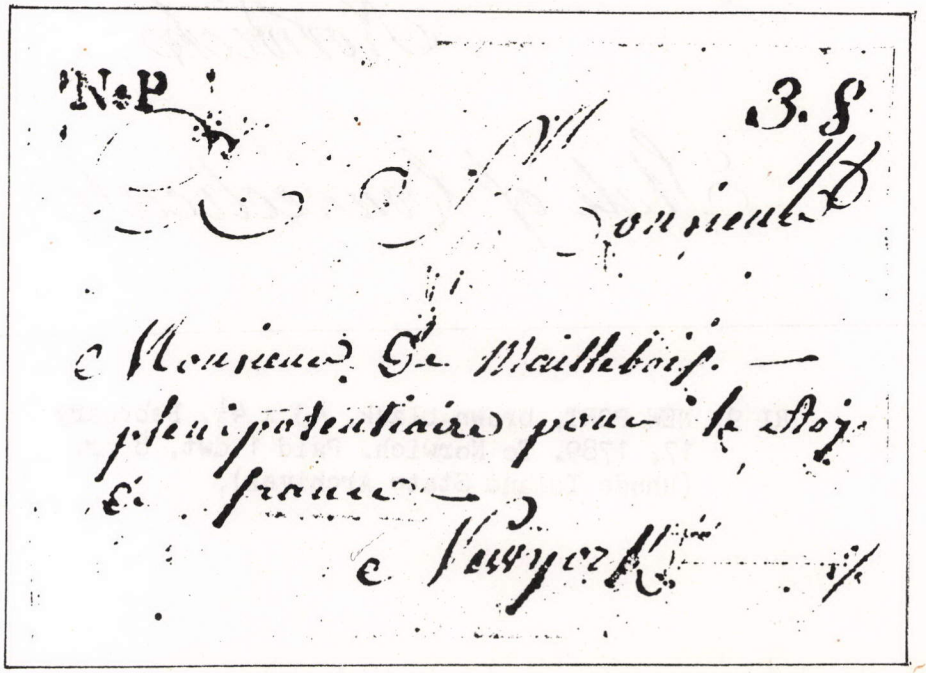


RI 6a. N(ewpor)t, R(hode Island), NEWPORT, red, 43 x 5, May 15, 1773, to Connecticut (Hartford). Rated 5 dwts. 5 grs. Local currency 1 sh. 10 d. (Yale University Library).

RHODE ISLAND

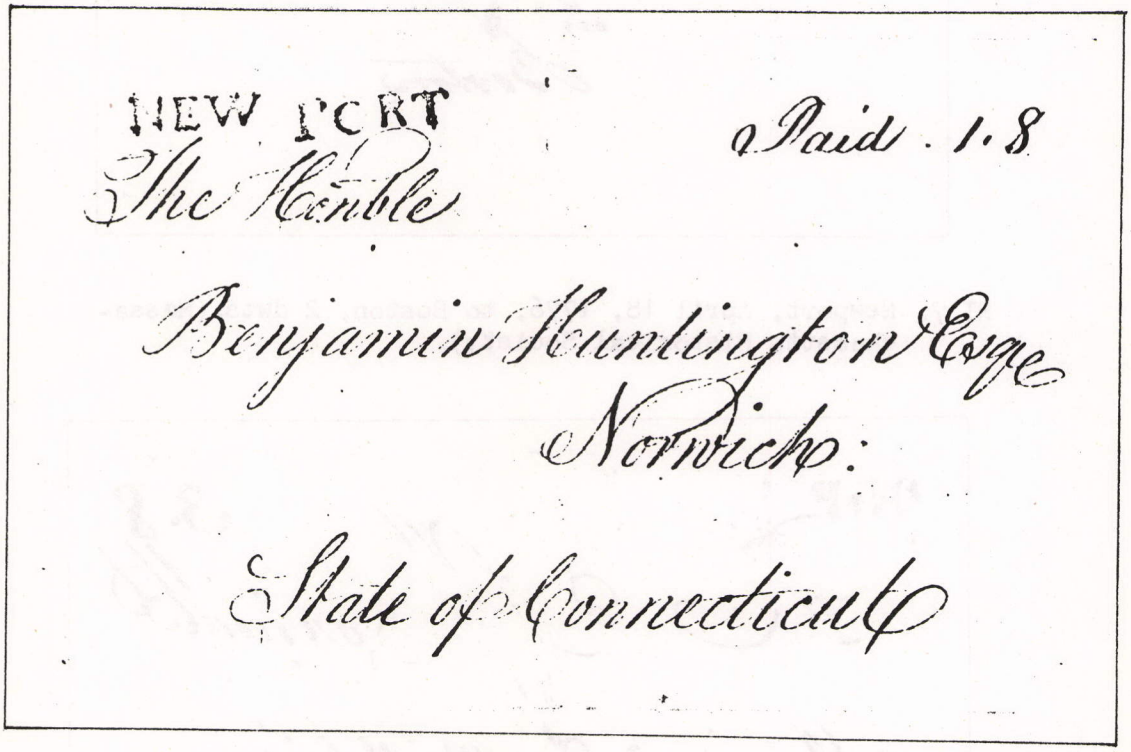


RI 7. Newport, April 18, 1776, to Boston, 2 dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



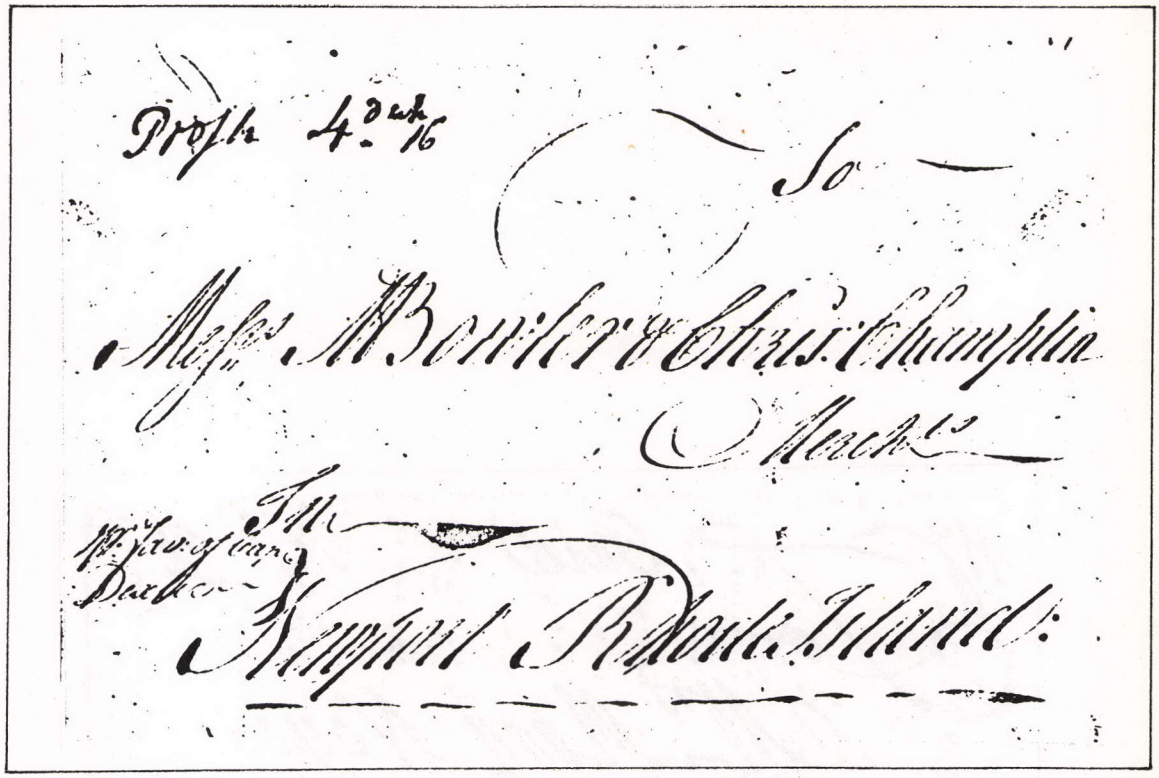
RI 8. N(ew)*P(ort), black, 12 x 5, August 6, 1785, to New York. 3 dwts, 8 gr. 1/8 local currency. (Don Knee, Warwick).

RHODE ISLAND

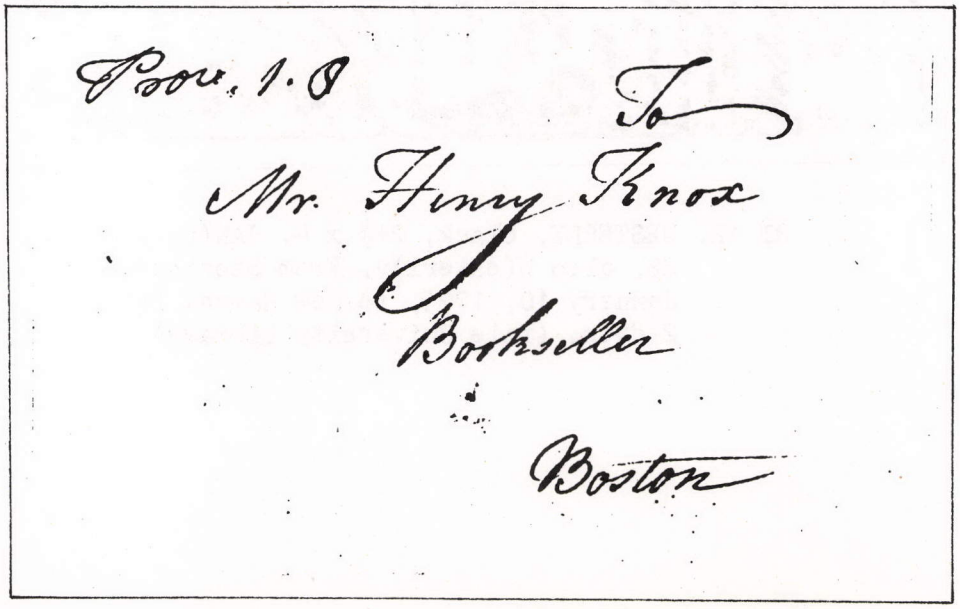


RI 9. NEW PORT, brown-black, 43 x 4½, February 17, 1789. To Norwich. Paid 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Rhode Island State Archives).

RHODE ISLAND



RI 10. Pro(vidence), from Paramaribo, D.W.I., May 13, 1761, to Newport. Ship letter, 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

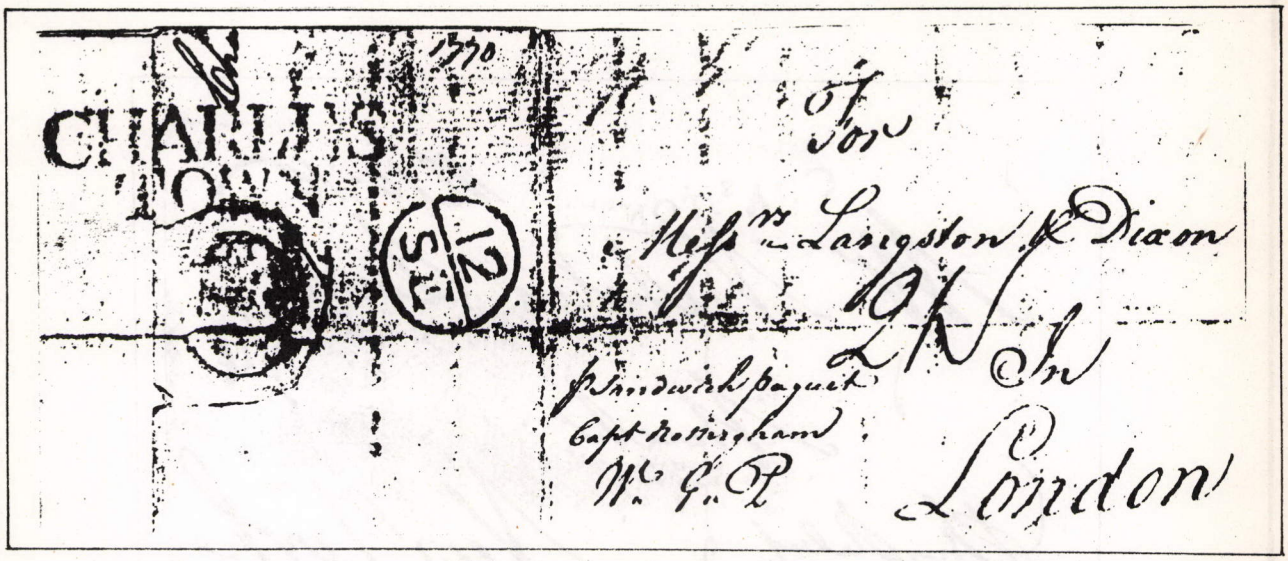


RI 11. Prov(idence), May 21, 1773. To Boston, 1 dwt, 8 gr. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

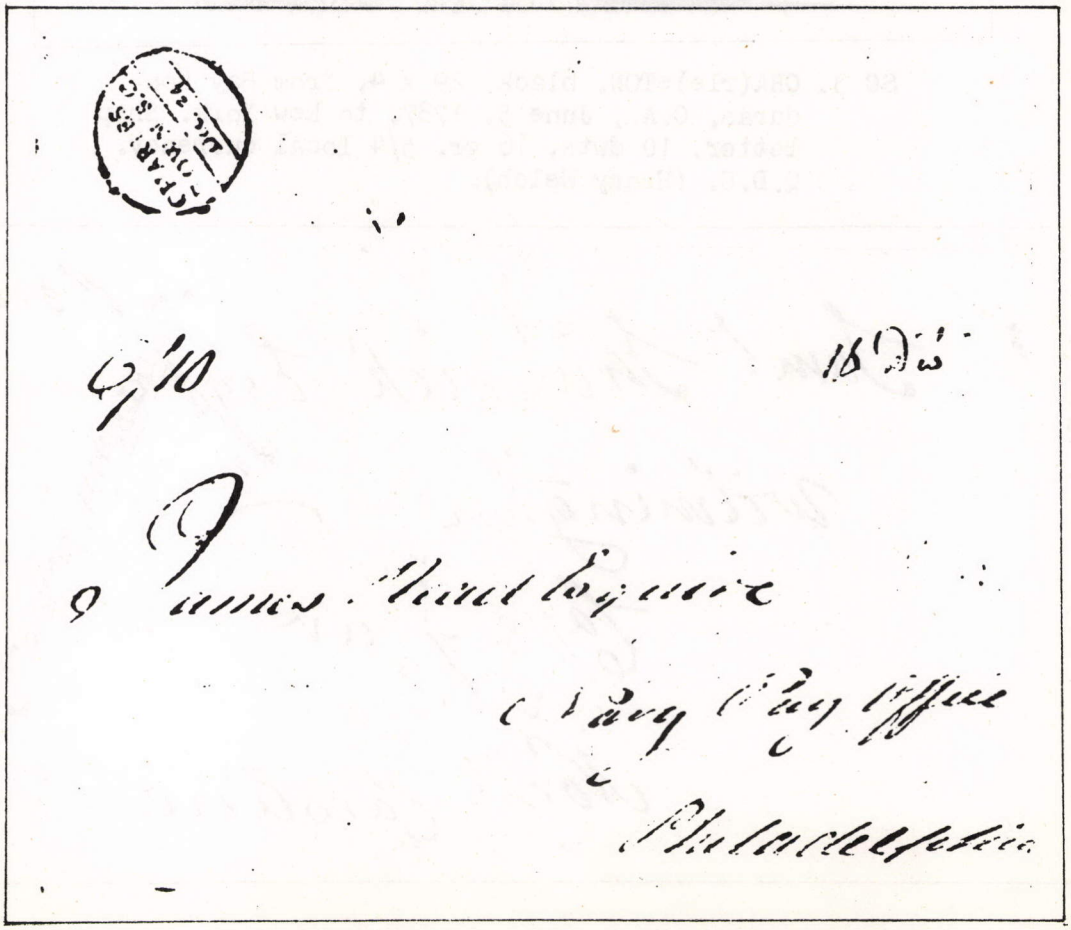
RHODE ISLAND

RI 12. WESTERLY, black, 21½ x 4. JAN(uary) 22, also W(esterl)y. From Stonington, January 10, 1775, to New Haven. Paid 2 dwts. (Yale University Library).

SOUTH CAROLINA

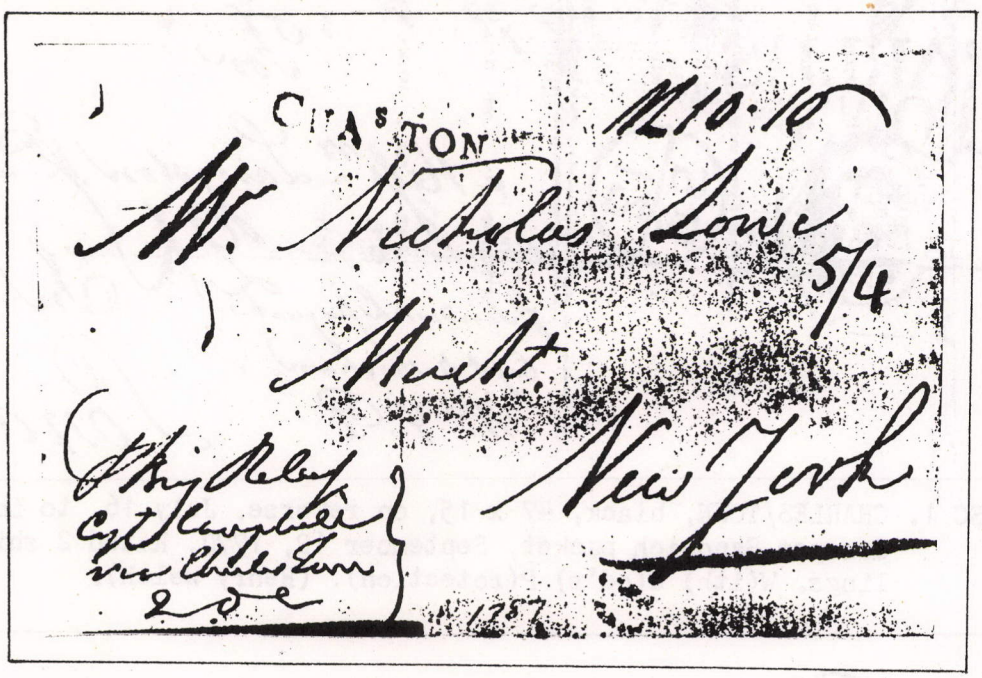


SC 1. CHARLES/TOWN, black, 47 x 15, on reverse, July 16, to London per Sandwich packet, September 12, 1770. Rated 2 shillings. W(ith) G(od's) P(rotection). (Henry Welch).

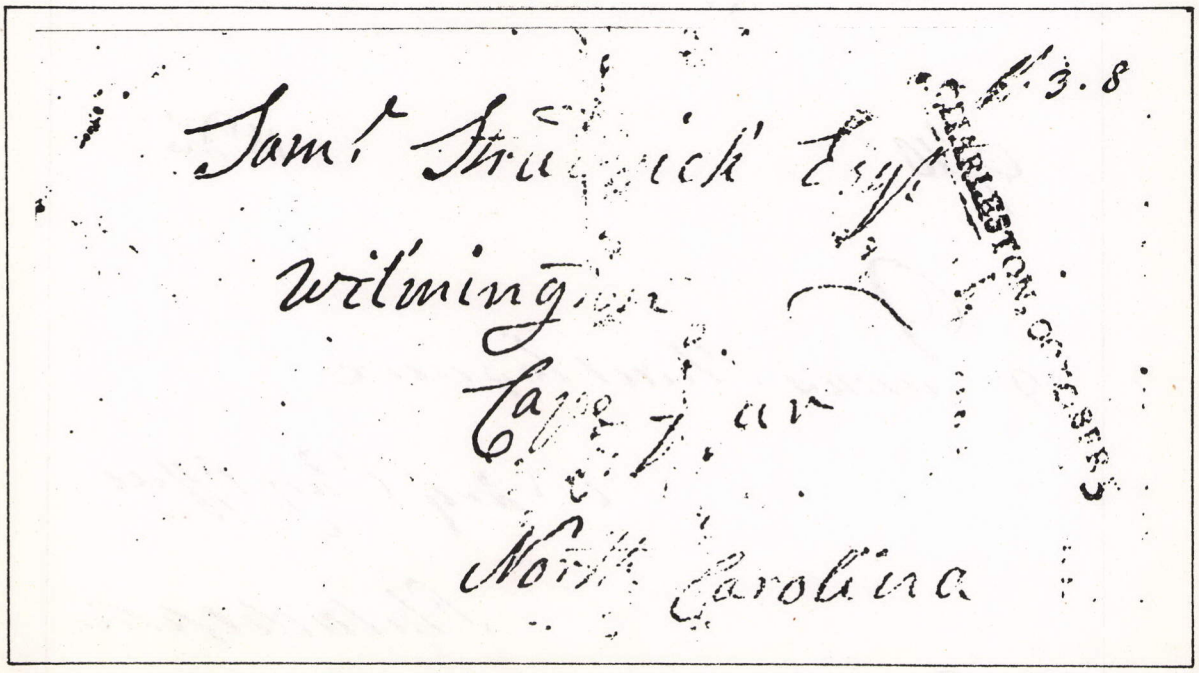


SC 2. CHARLES/TOWN S.C. in circle, 21 mm, black, Dec(ember) 24, on reverse, 1778. To Philadelphia, 14 dwts. 6/10 local currency. (Rhode Island Historical Society).

SOUTH CAROLINA

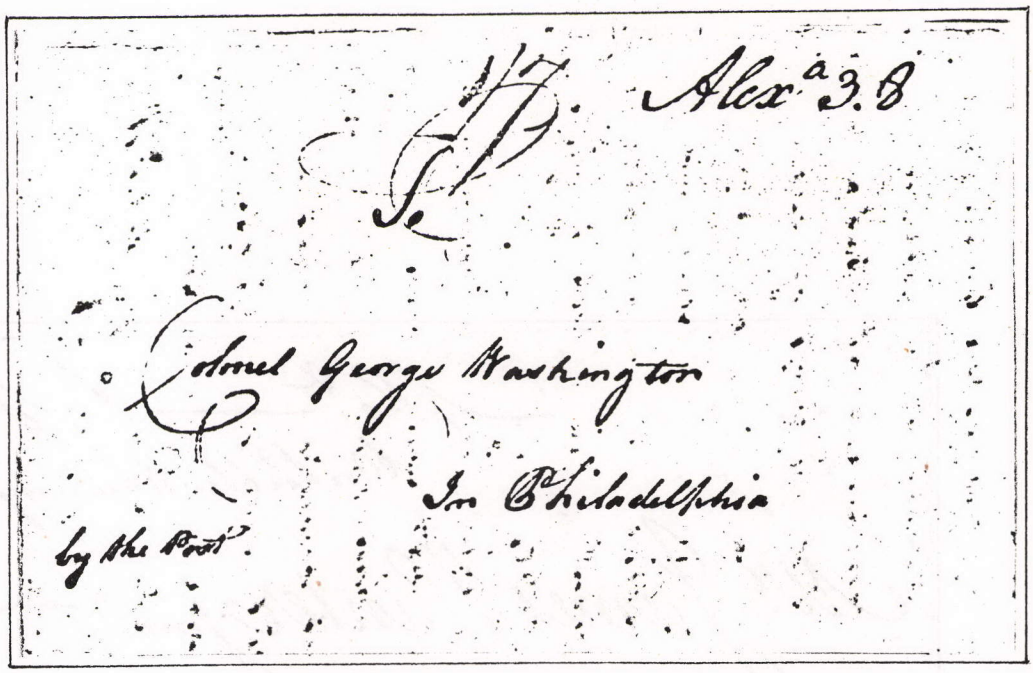


SC 3. CHA(rle)sTON, black, 29 x 4, from Bay Honduras, C.A., June 5, 1787, to New York. Ship letter, 10 dwts, 16 gr. 5/4 local currency. Q.D.C. (Henry Welch).

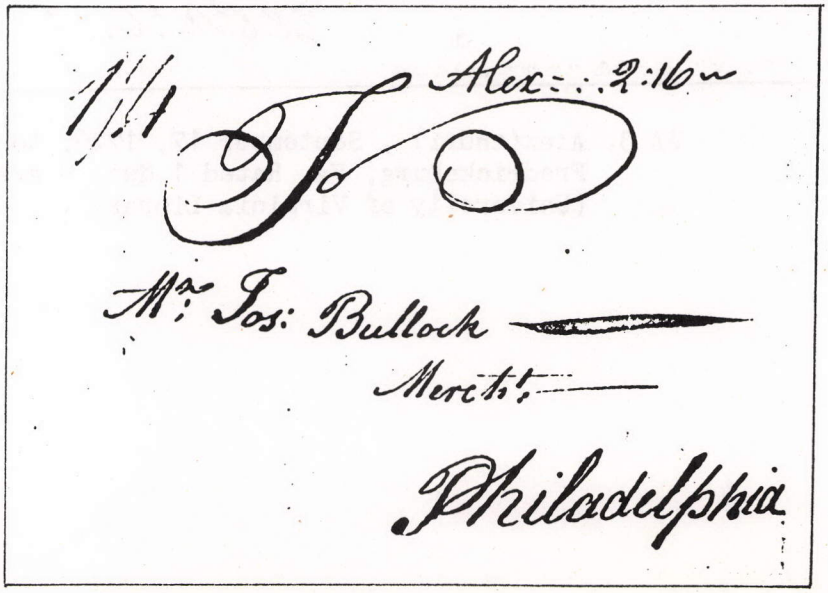


SC 4. CHARLESTON, black, 33 x 3, OCTOBER 5, 1787, to Wilmington, N.C. Ship letter 3 dwts, 8 gr. (University of North Carolina Library).

VIRGINIA

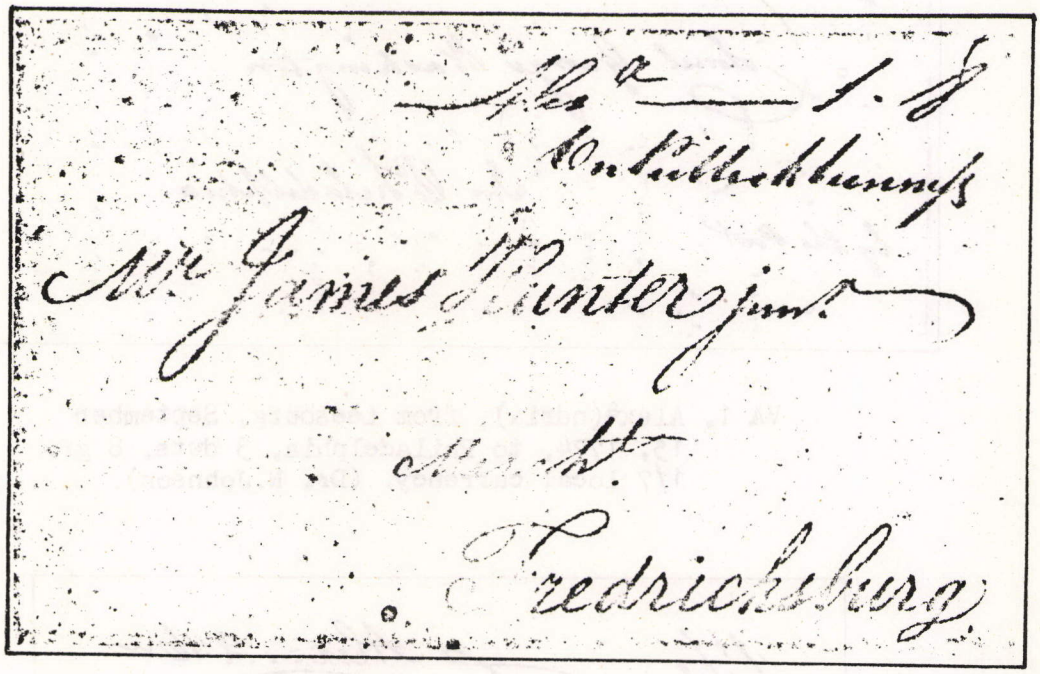


VA 1. Alex[a](ndria), from Leesburg, September 15, 1774, to Philadelphia, 3 dwts, 8 gr. 1/7 local currency. (Dr. N.Johnson).



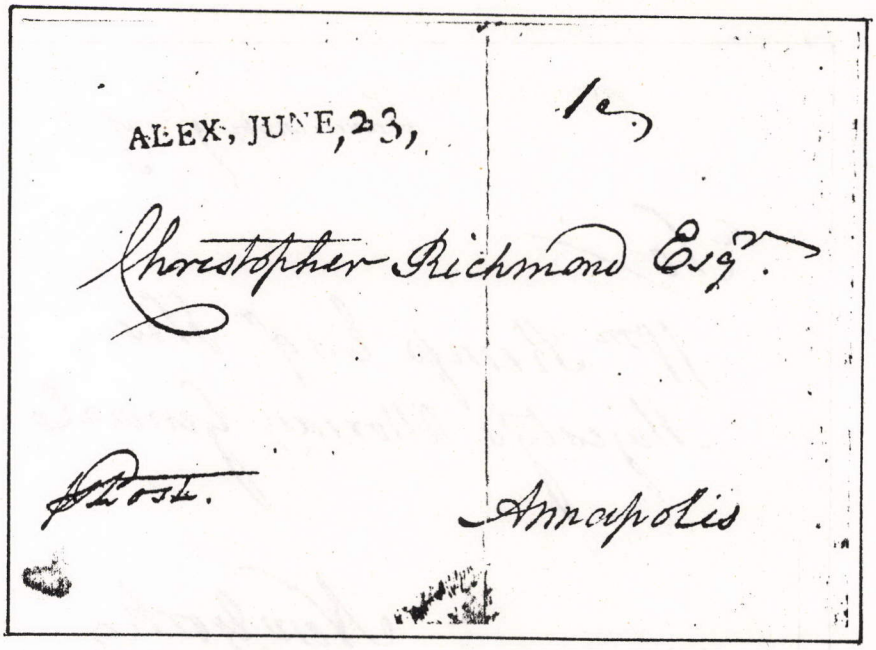
VA 2. Alex=:, August, 1776, to Philadelphia. 2 dwts, 16 gr. 1/6 local currency. (Pennsylvania State Archives).

VIRGINIA

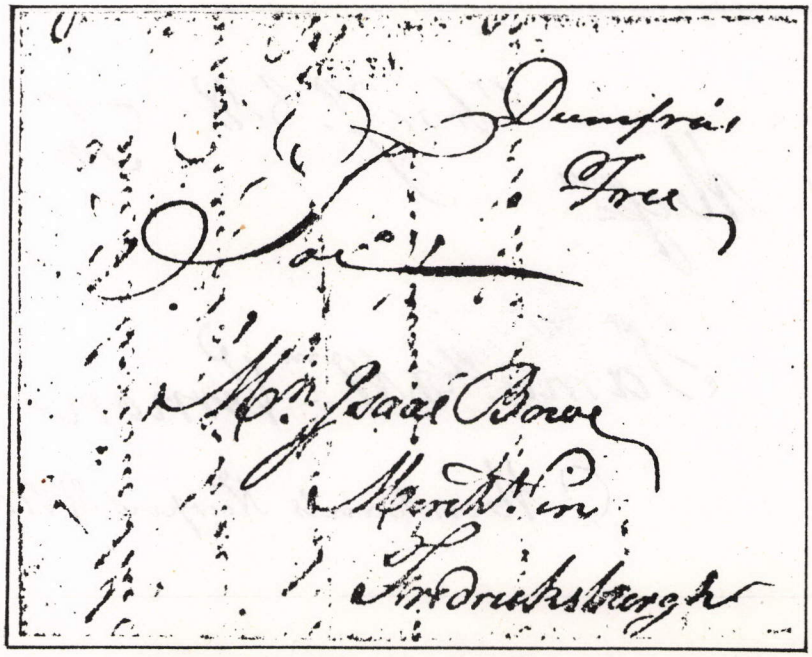


VA 3. Alex(andri) , September 17, 1776, to Fredricksburg, Va. Rated 1 dwt. 8 grs. (University of Virginia Library).

VIRGINIA

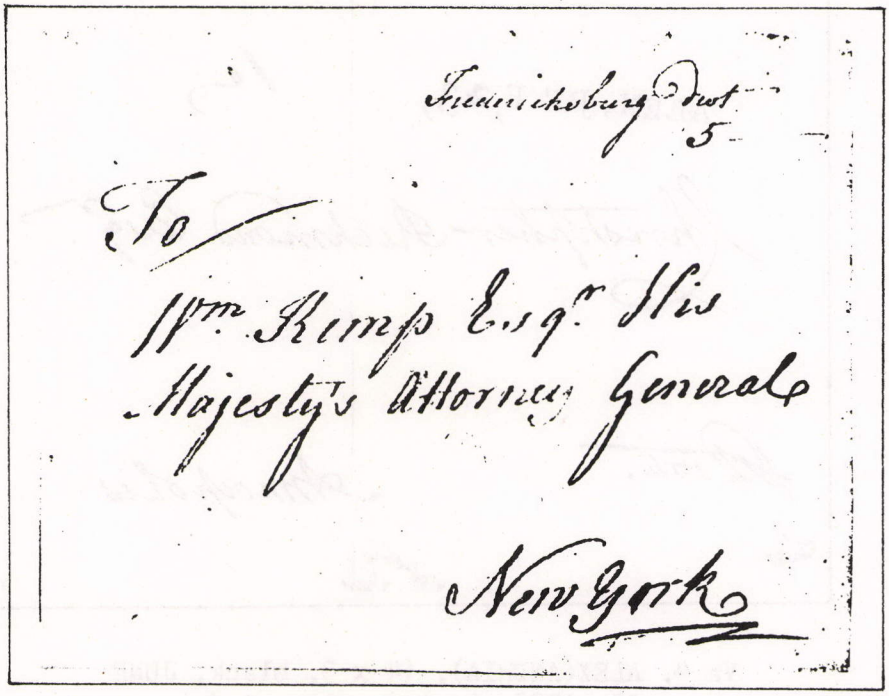


Va 4. ALEX(ANDRIA), 14 x 3, black, JUNE 23, 1788, to Annapolis. 1 dwt. (University of Virginia Library).

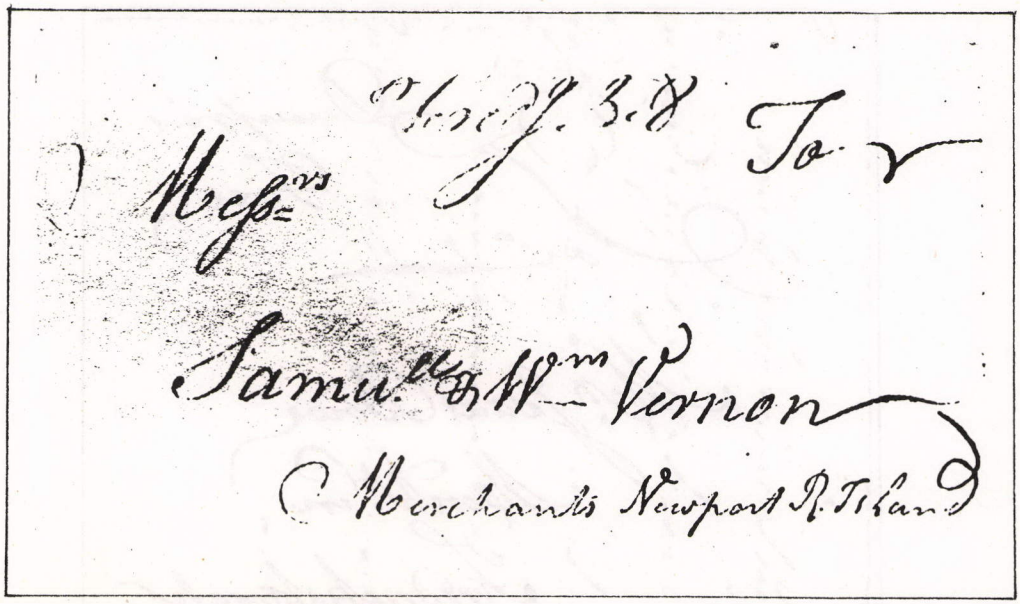


VA 5. Dumfries, June 15, 1778. Free. To Fredericksburgh. (University of Virginia Library).

VIRGINIA

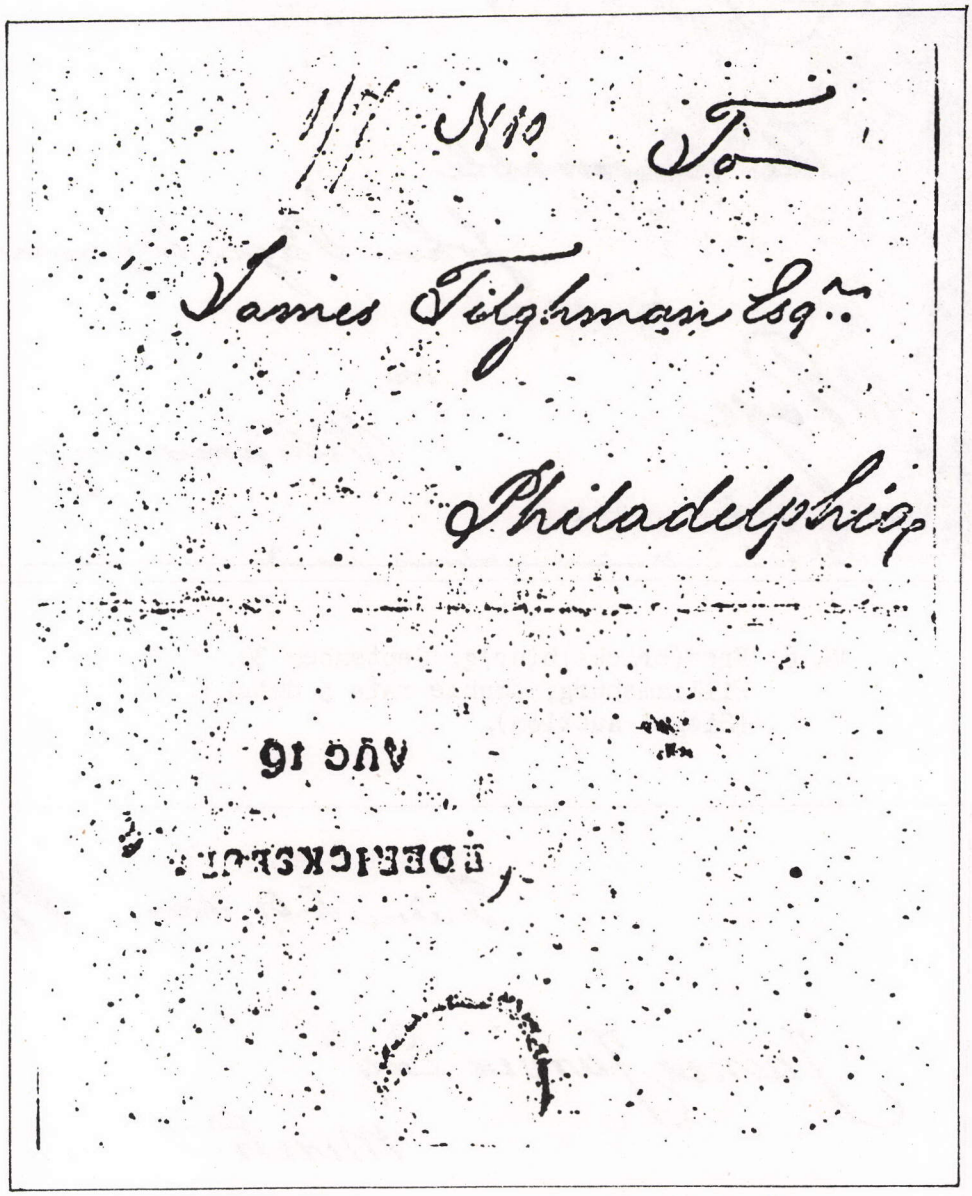


VA 5a. Fredericksburg, from Williamsburg, May 10, 1755, to New York, 5 dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).



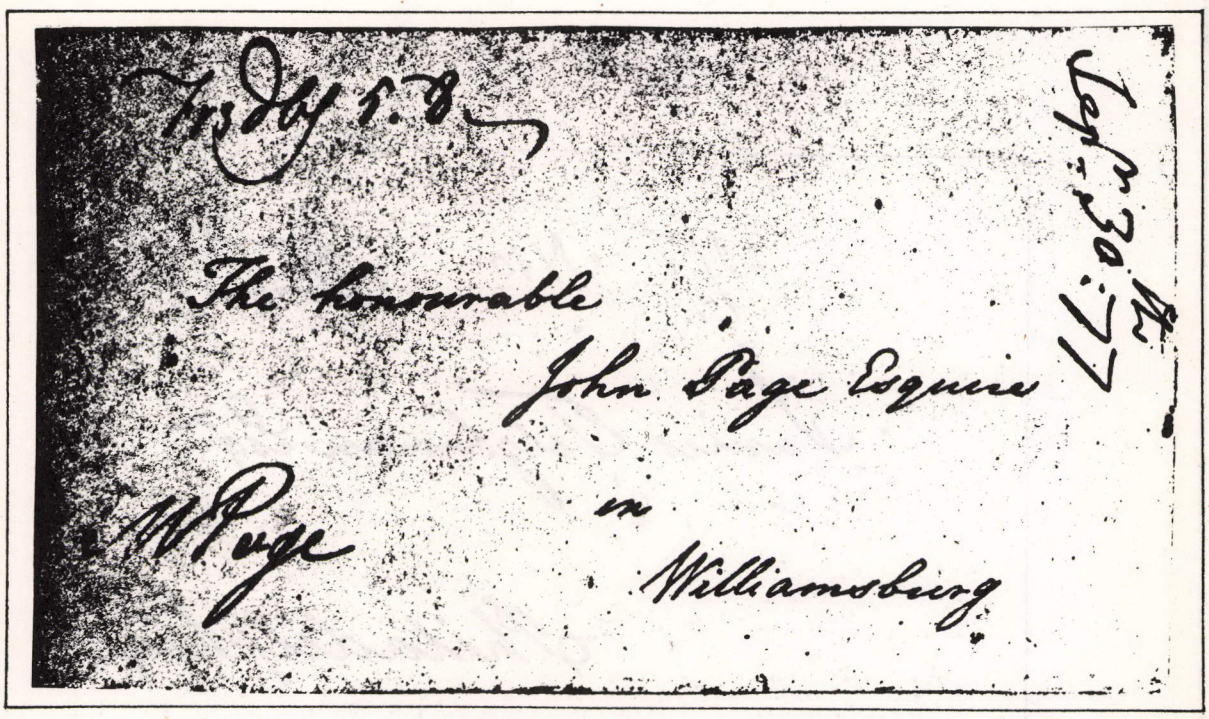
VA 6. Fred(ericksbur)g. August 24, 1772, to Newport, R.I. 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Rhode Island State Archives).

VIRGINIA

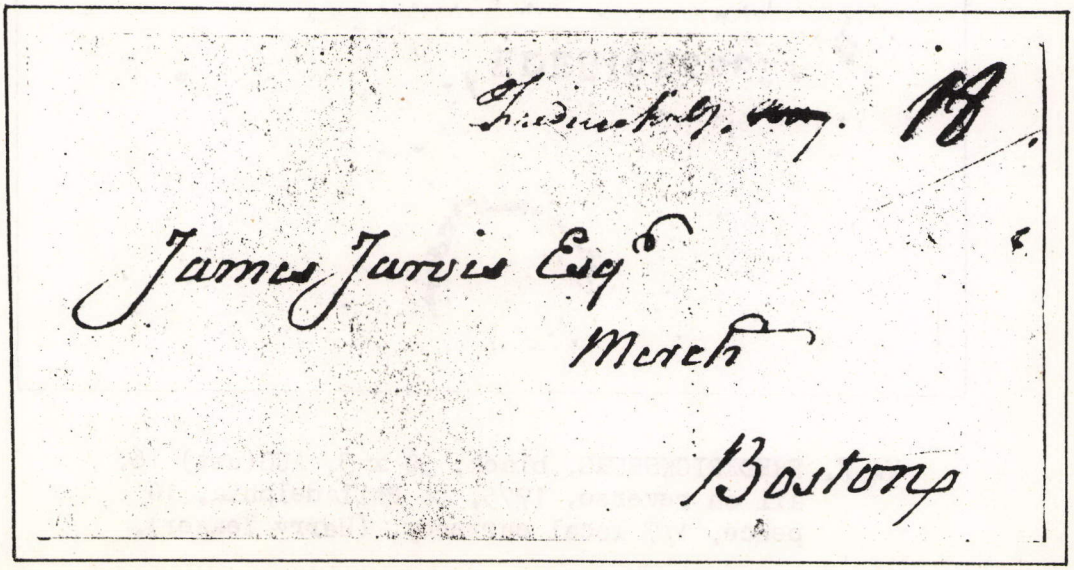


VA 7. FREDERICKSBURG, black, 50 x 3, AUG(ust) 16, all on reverse, 1775, to Philadelphia, 10 pence, 1/7 local currency. (Harry Yeager).

VIRGINIA

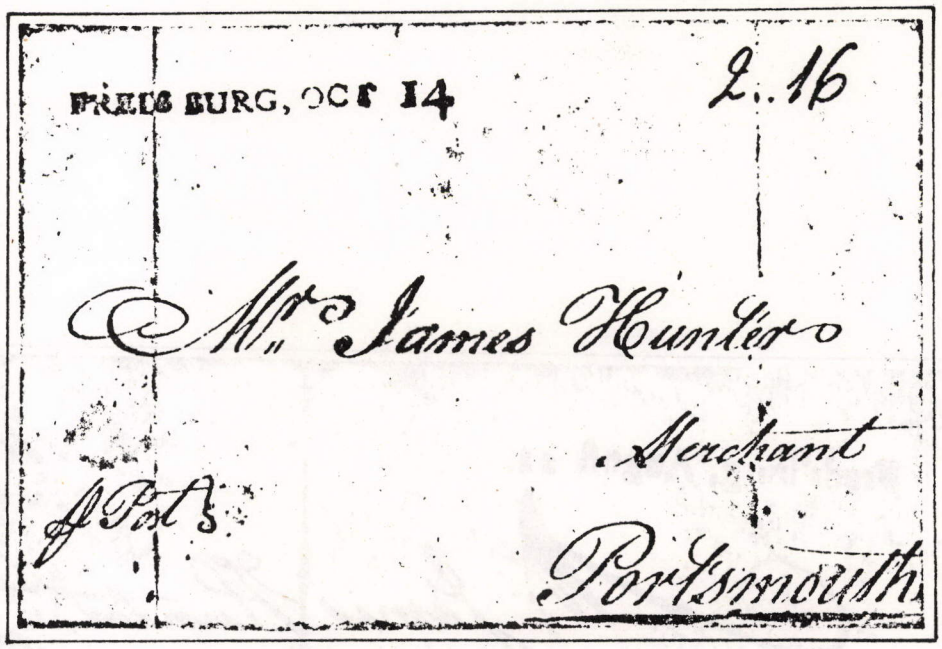


VA 8. Fred(ericks)b(ur)g. September 30, 1777, to Williamsburg, double rate 5 dwts, 8 gr. (Siegel auction).

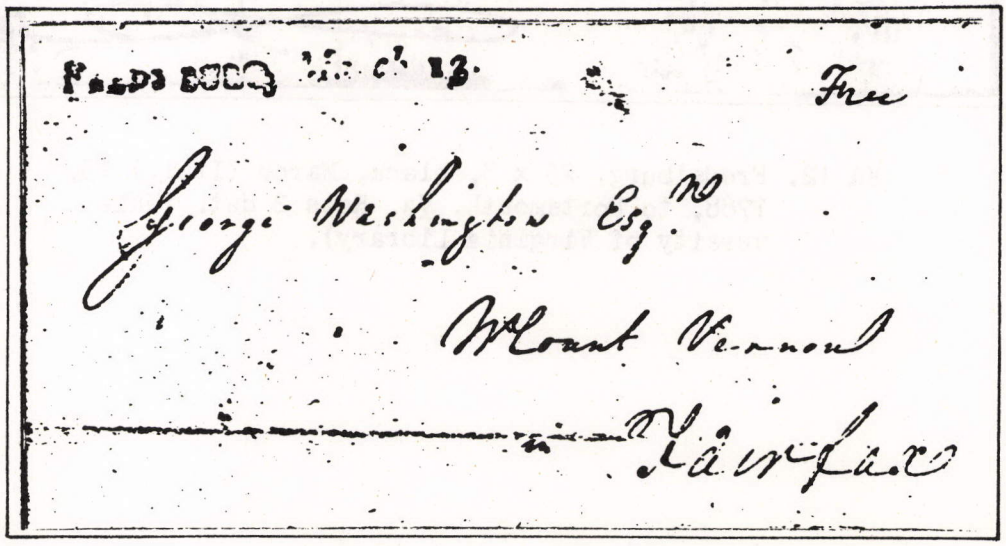


VA 9. Fredericksb(ur)g, August 20, 1782, to Boston, 18 dwts, triple rate. (Connecticut Histofical Society).

VIRGINIA

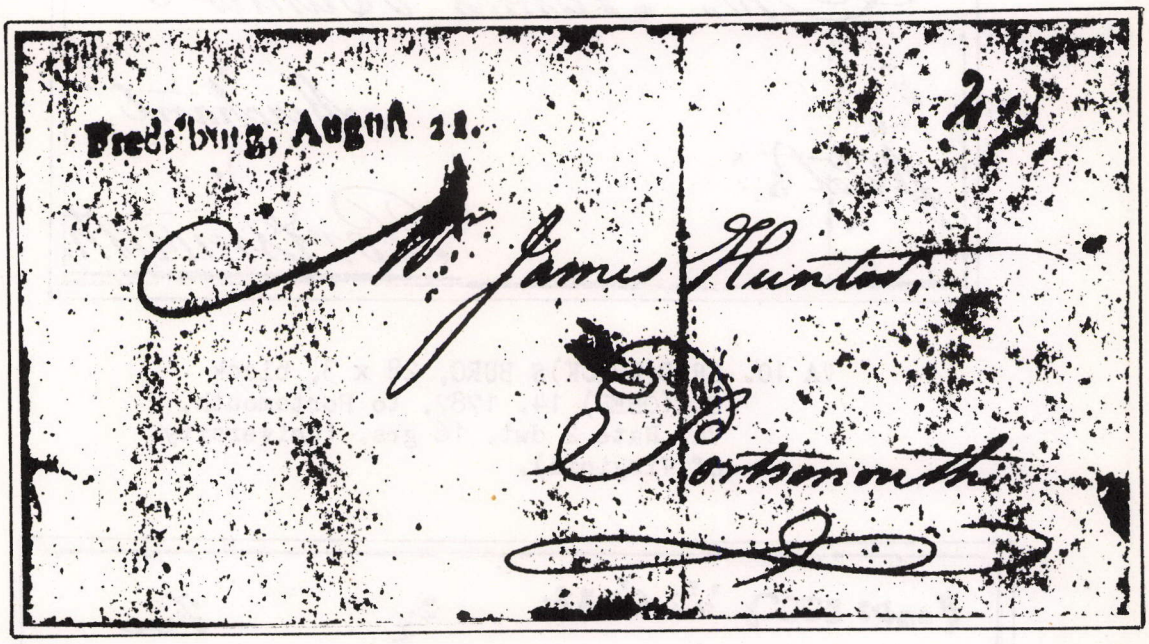


VA 10. FRED(ERICK)S BURG, 28 x 3, black OCT(OBER) 14, 1787, to Portsmouth, Va. Rate 2 dwt. 16 grs. (University of Virginia).



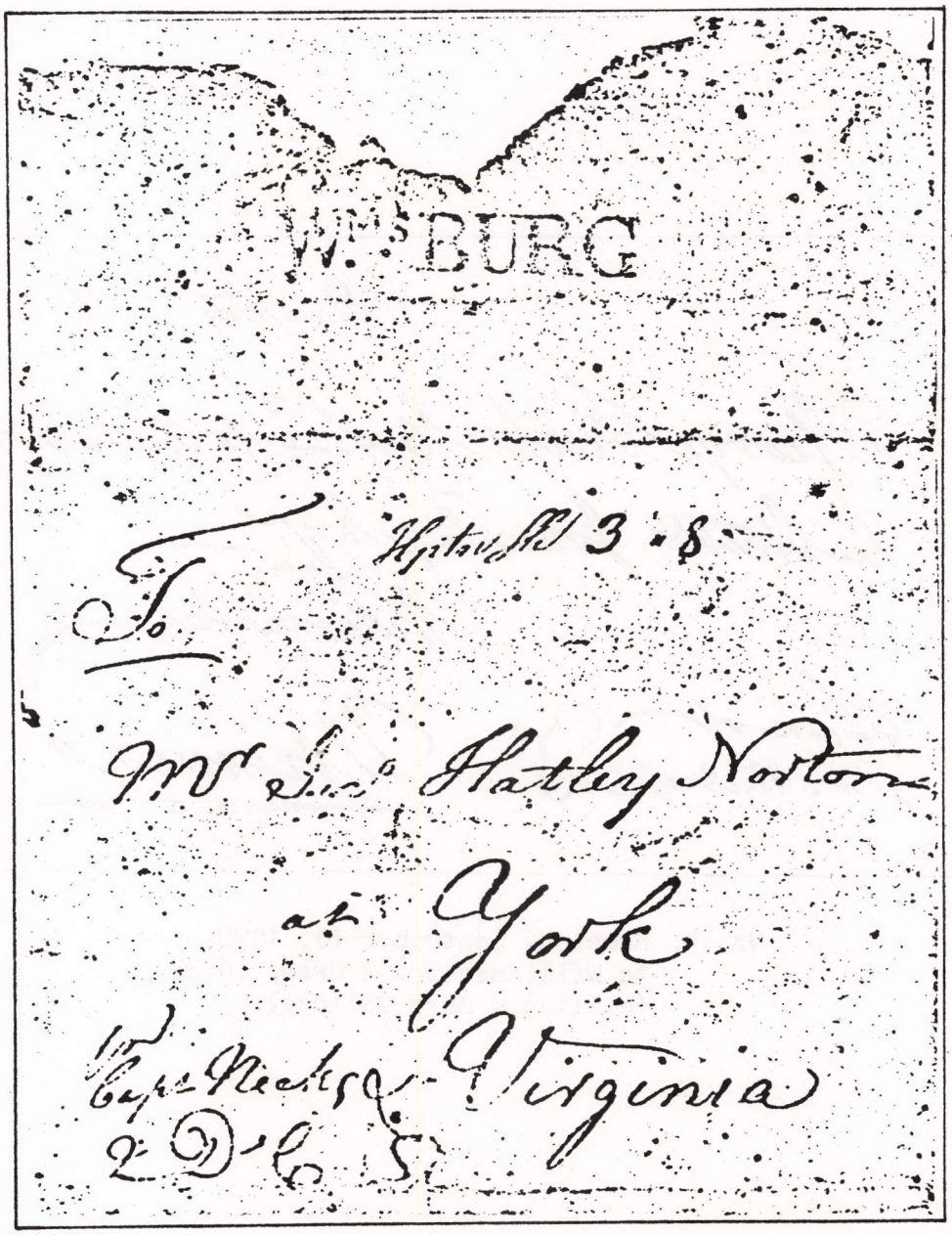
VA 11. FRED(ERICK)S BURG, 28 x 3, black. March (italics) 13, 1788, to Mont Vernon, Free. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

VIRGINIA



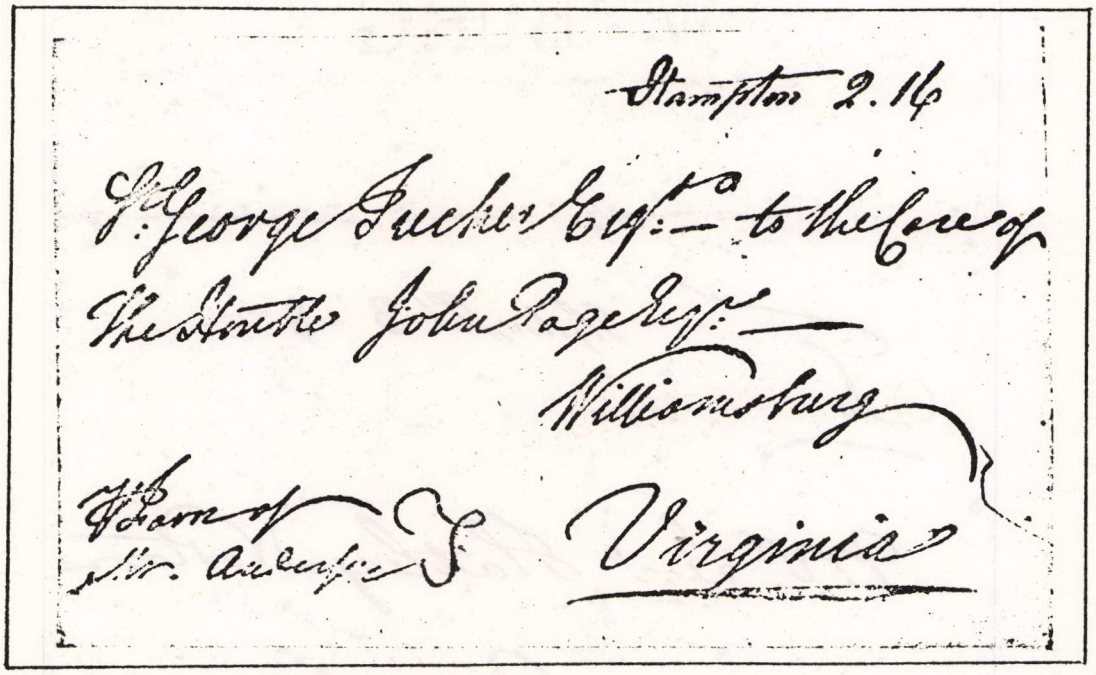
VA 12. Freds'burg, 25 x 3, black, March (Ital.) 13, 1788, to Portsmouth, Va. Rate 2 dwt. (University of Virginia Library).

VIRGINIA



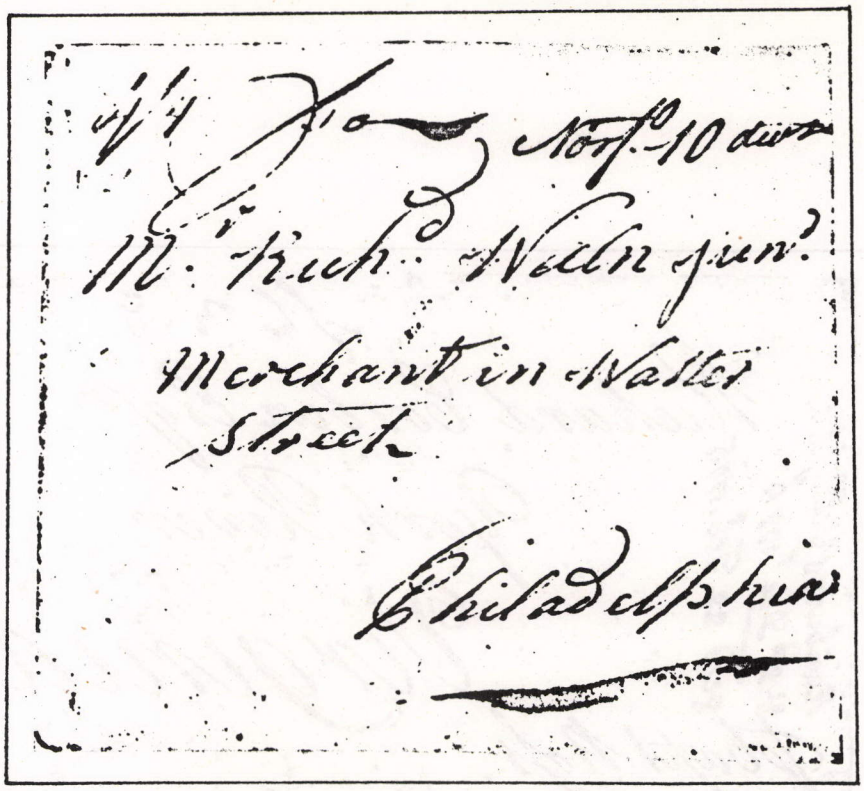
VA 13. H(am)pton, 1771, from London, June 4, via WMSBURG, black, 47 x 8, to York, Va, Ship letter 3 dwts, 8 gr. Q.D.C. (Williamsburg Colonial Archives).

VIRGINIA

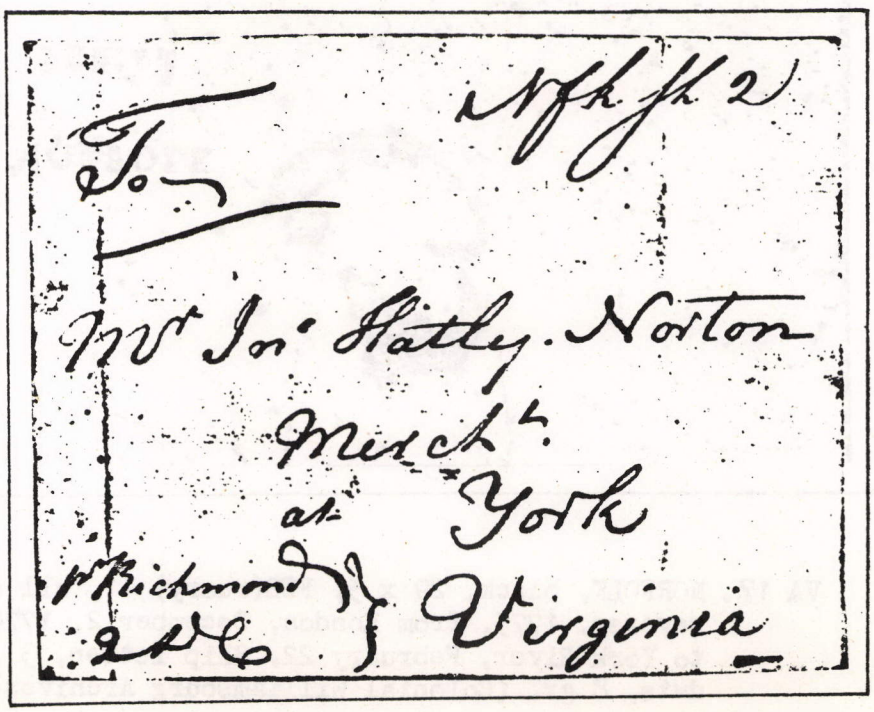


VA 14. Hampton, September 10, 1778,
to Williamsburg. 2 dwts, 16 gr.
(William & Mary College).

VIRGINIA

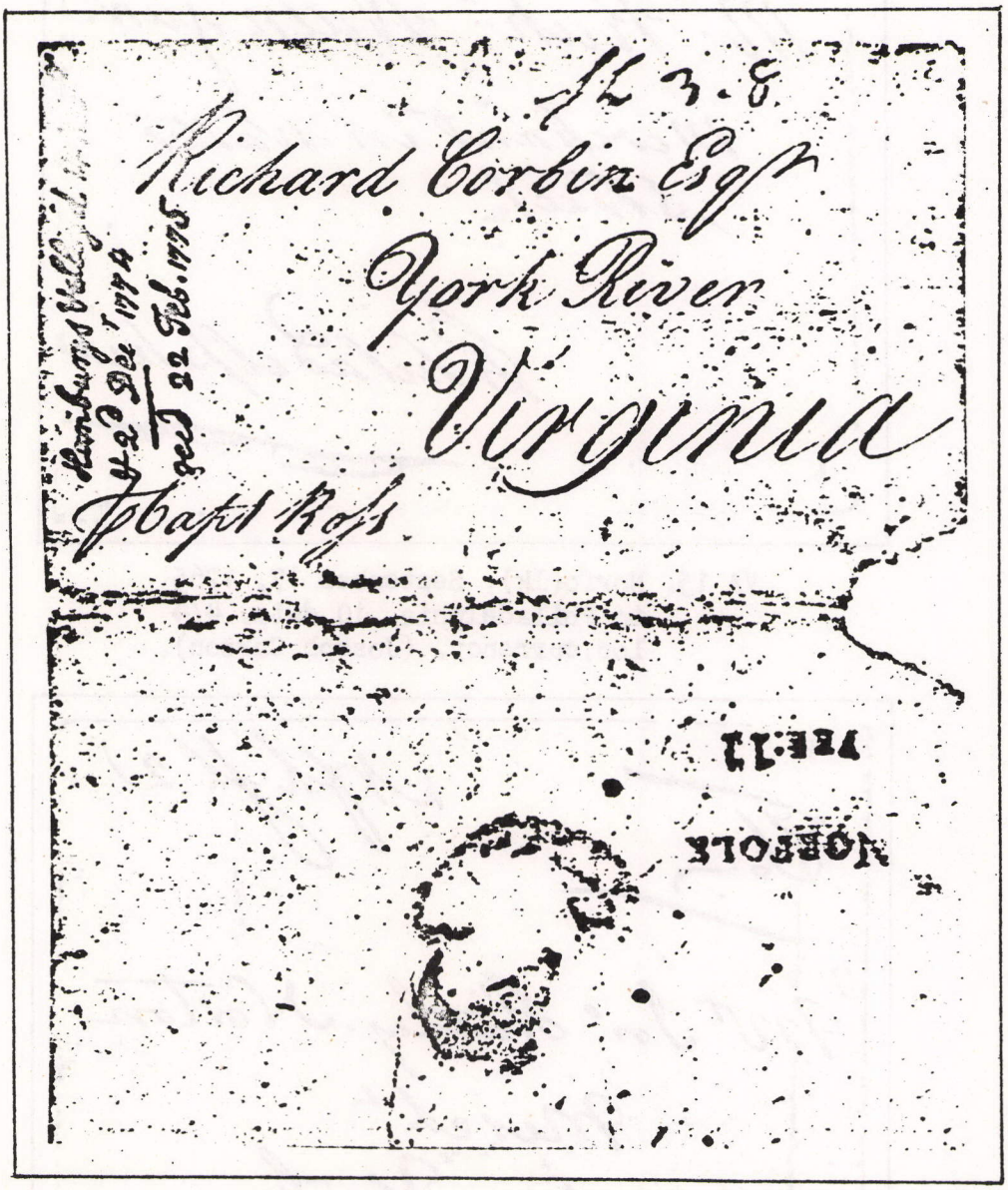


VA 15. Norfo(lk), September 17, 1765 to Philadelphia. 10 dwts. 4/4 loc.currency. (Joseph Carson).



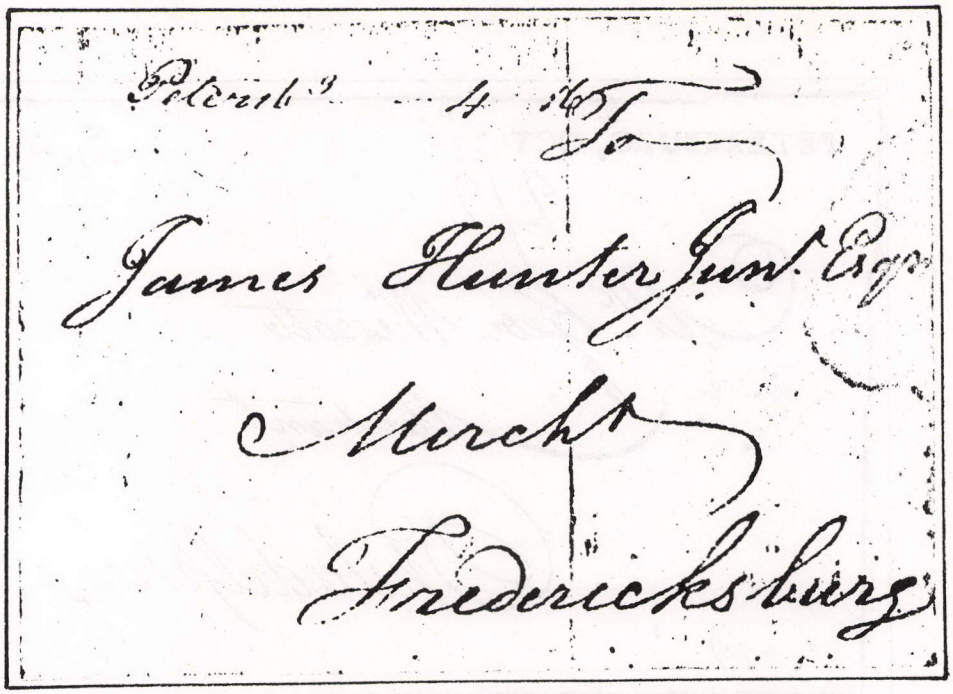
VA 16. N(or)f(ol)k, from London, August 5, 1773, to York, Va. Ship letter, 2 dwts. (Colonial Williamsburg Archives).

VIRGINIA

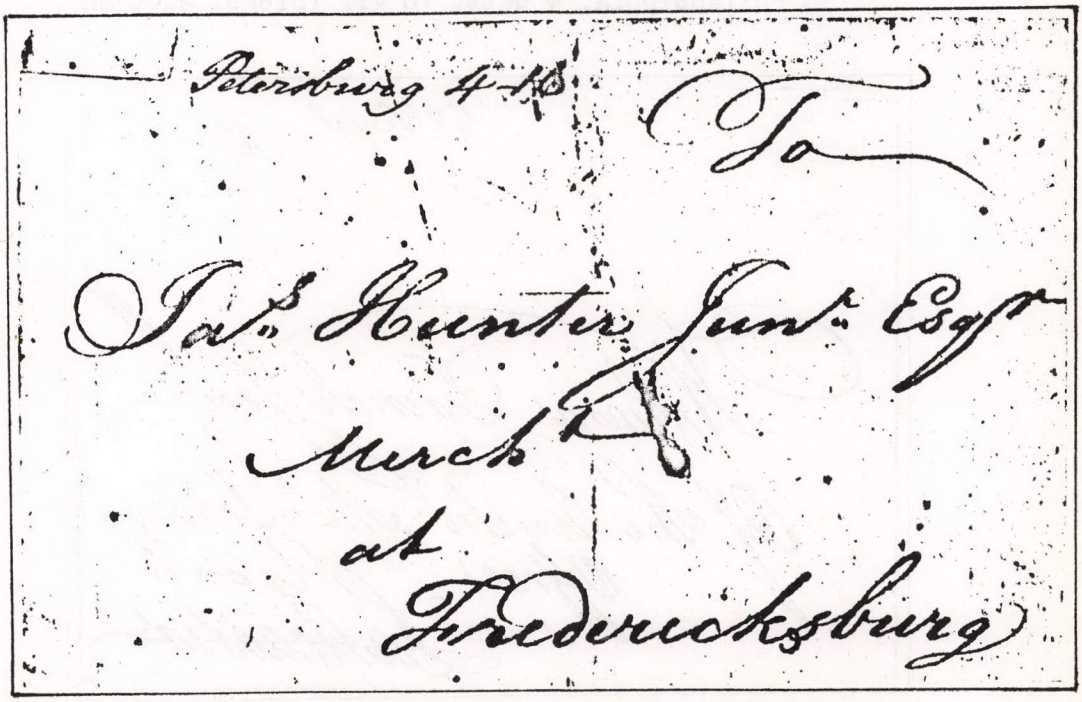


VA 17. NORFOLK, black, 29 x 5, FEB(ruary) 11, all on reverse, 1775, from London, December 2, 1774, to York River, February 22. Ship letter, 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Colonial Williamsburg Archives).

VIRGINIA

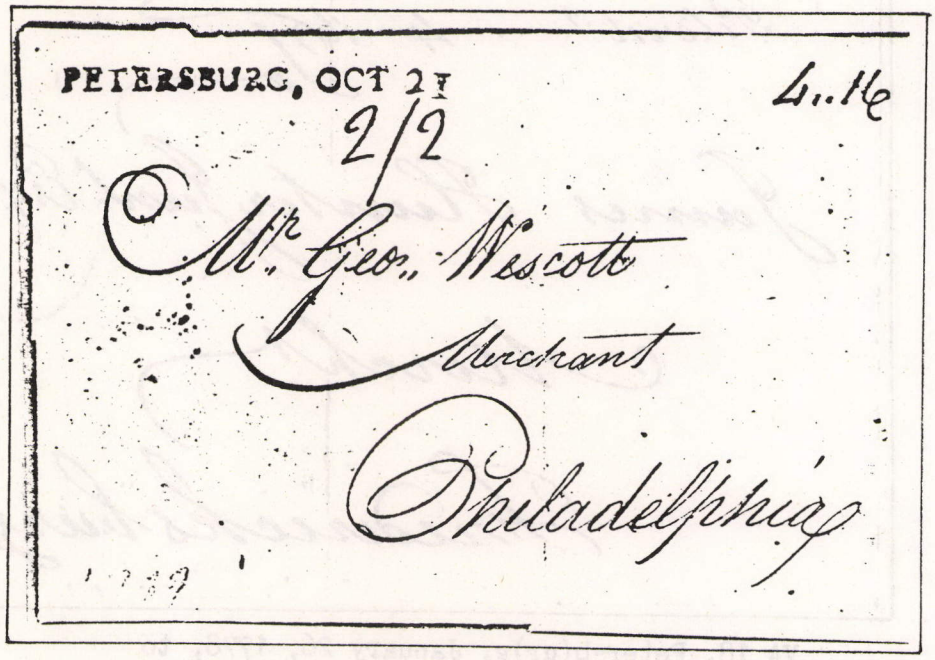


VA 18. Petersb(ur)g, January 26, 1778, to Fredericksburg. Rate 4 dwts. 16 grs. (University of Virginia Library).

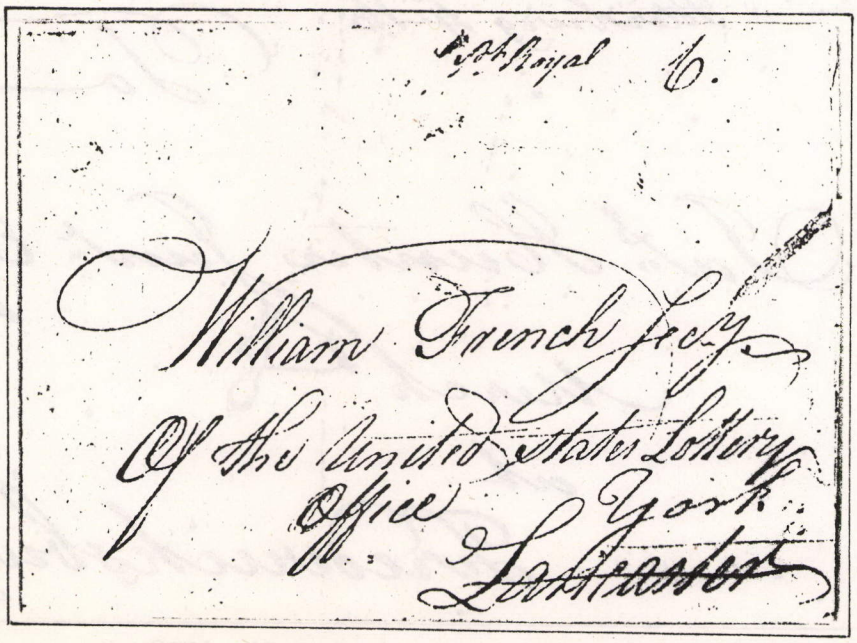


Va 19. Petersburg, September 21, 1778, to Fredericksburg, Rate 4 dwts. 16 grs. (University of Virginia Library).

VIRGINIA

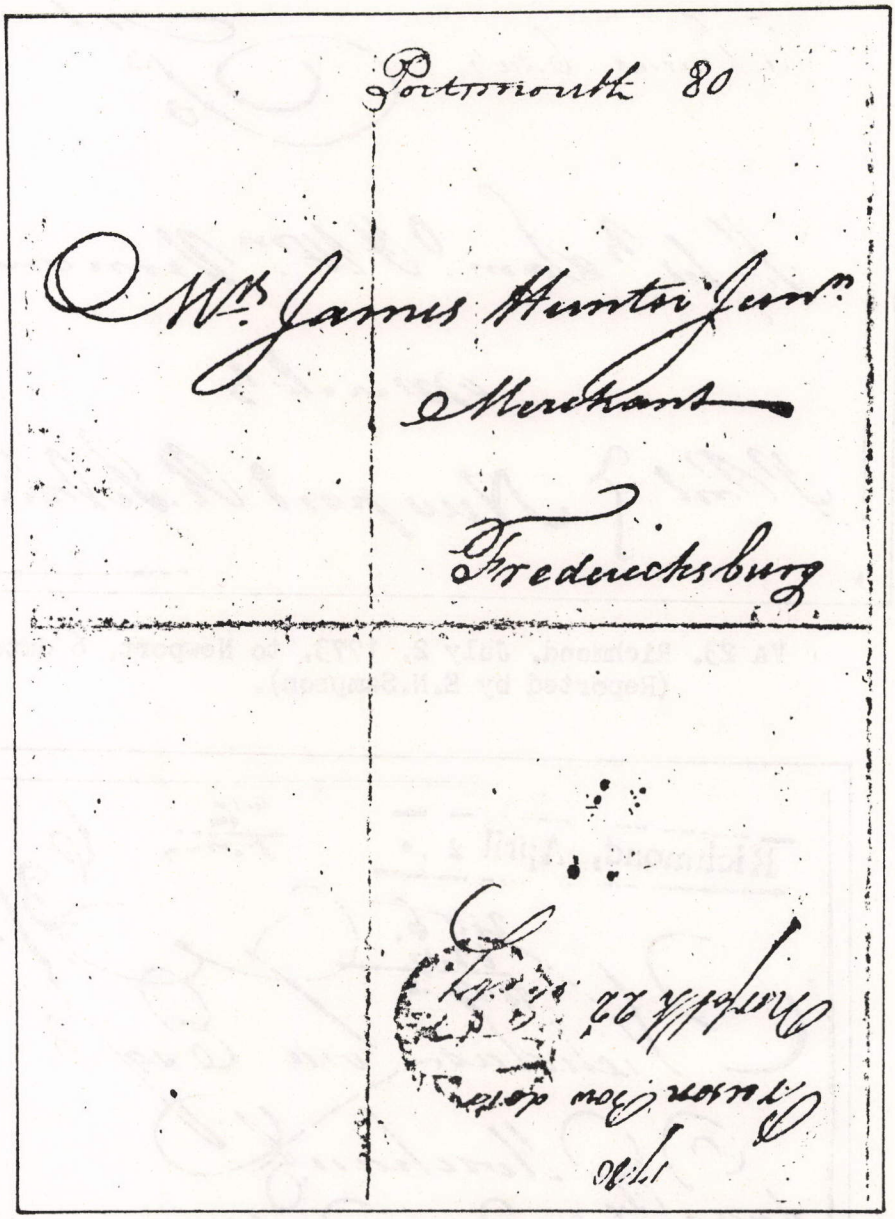


VA 20. PETERSBURG, black, 29 x 3, OCT(ober) 21, 1787.
To Philadelphia, 4 dwts, 16 gr. (Siegel auction).



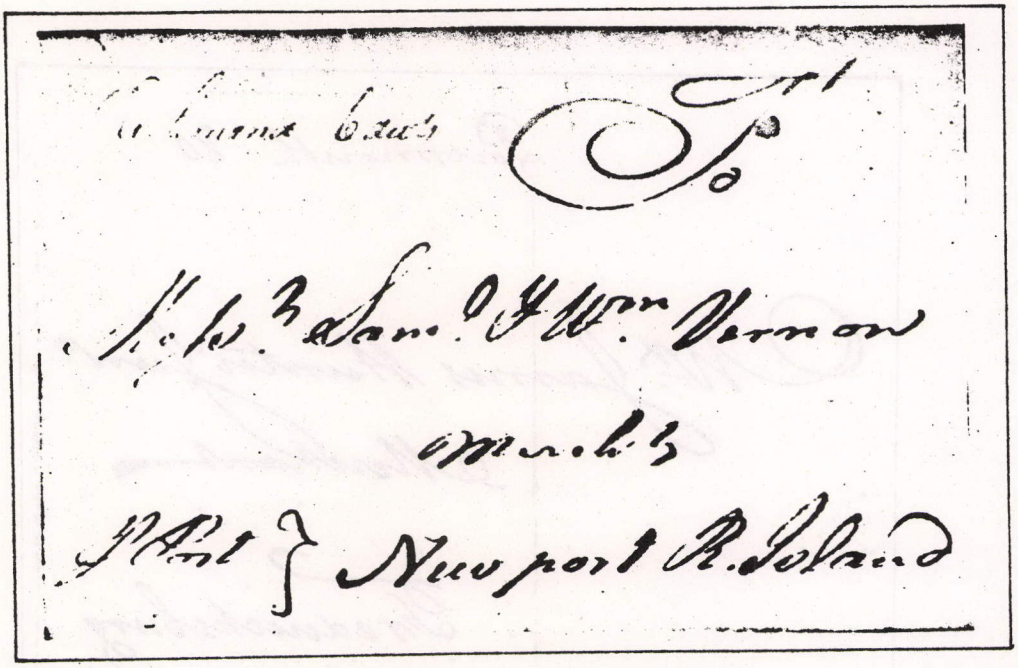
VA 21. P(or)t Royal, April 18, 1778, via Lancaster,
to York, Pa. 6 dwts. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

VIRGINIA

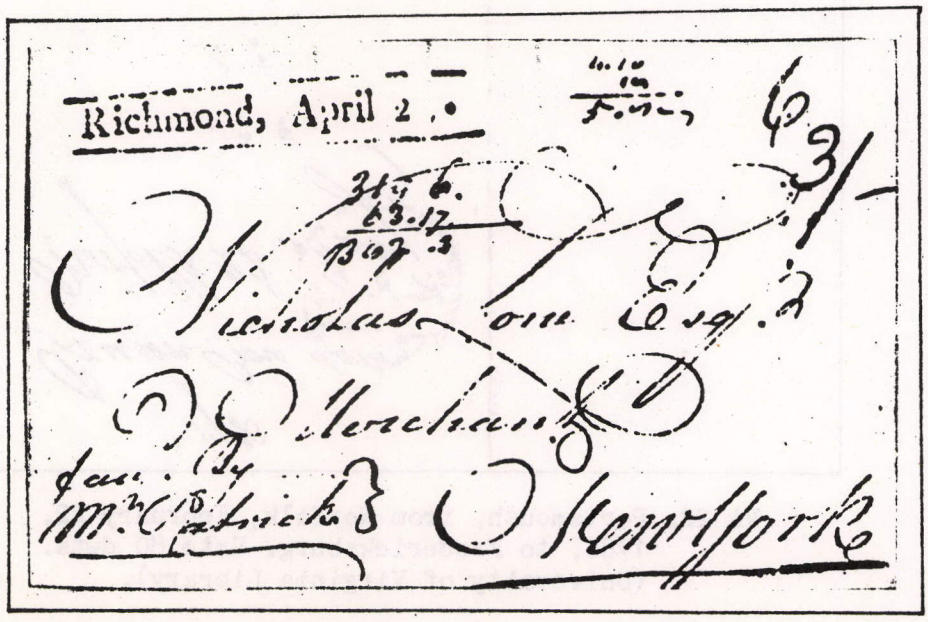


VA 22. Portsmouth, from Norfolk, February 22, 1780, to Fredericksburg. Rate 80 dwts. (University of Virginia Library).

VIRGINIA

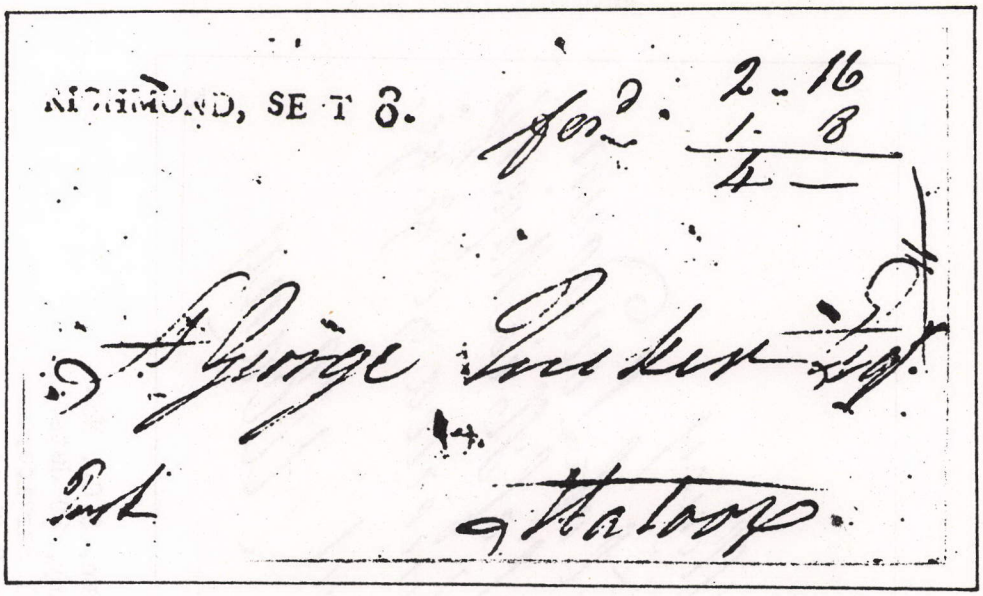


VA 23. Richmond, July 2, 1773, to Newport, 6 dwts. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).

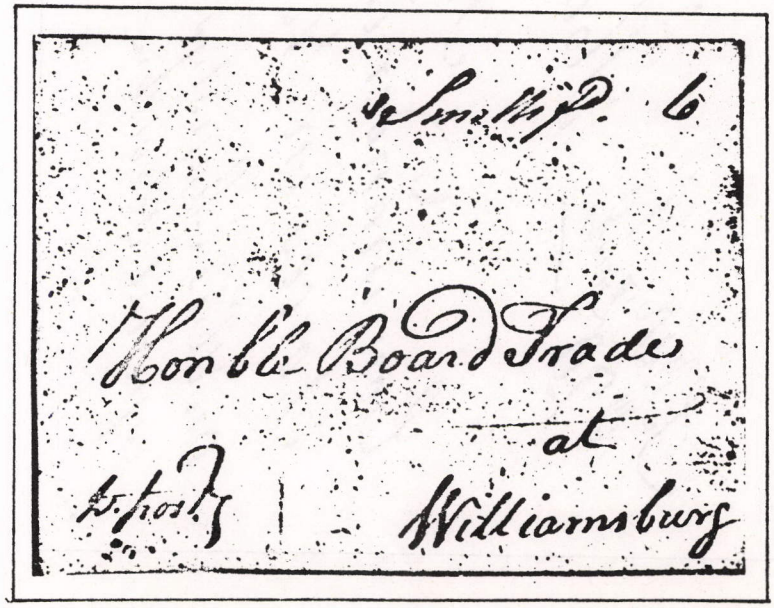


VA 24. Richmond, black, 24 x 6, April 23, 1787, from Yorktown, April 10, to New York, 6 dwts. 3/- local currency. (J.B.Eck, Ormond Beach).

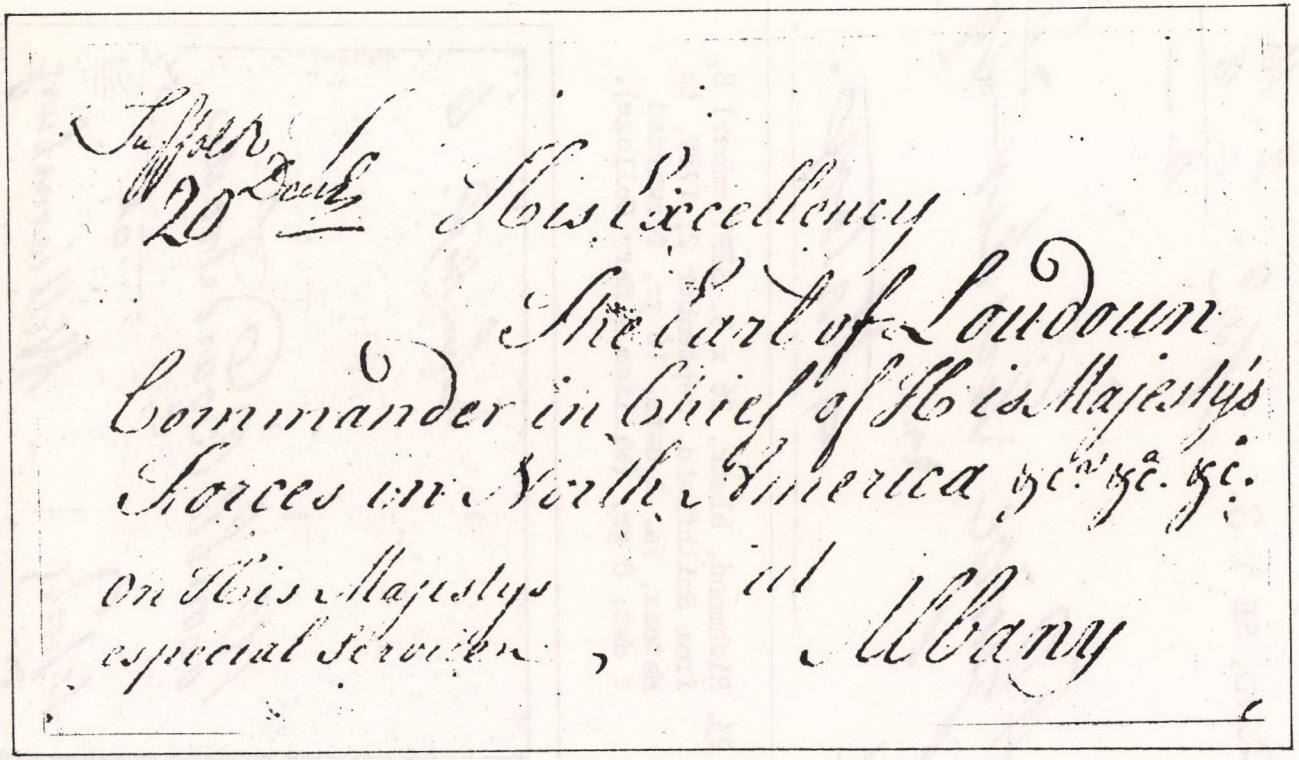
VIRGINIA



VA 25. Richmond, black, 26 x 3, SEPT(ember) 8, from Smithfield, September 2, 1787, to Matoax, Va. 2 dwts, 16 gr, forwarded 1 dwt, 8 gr. (William & Mary College).

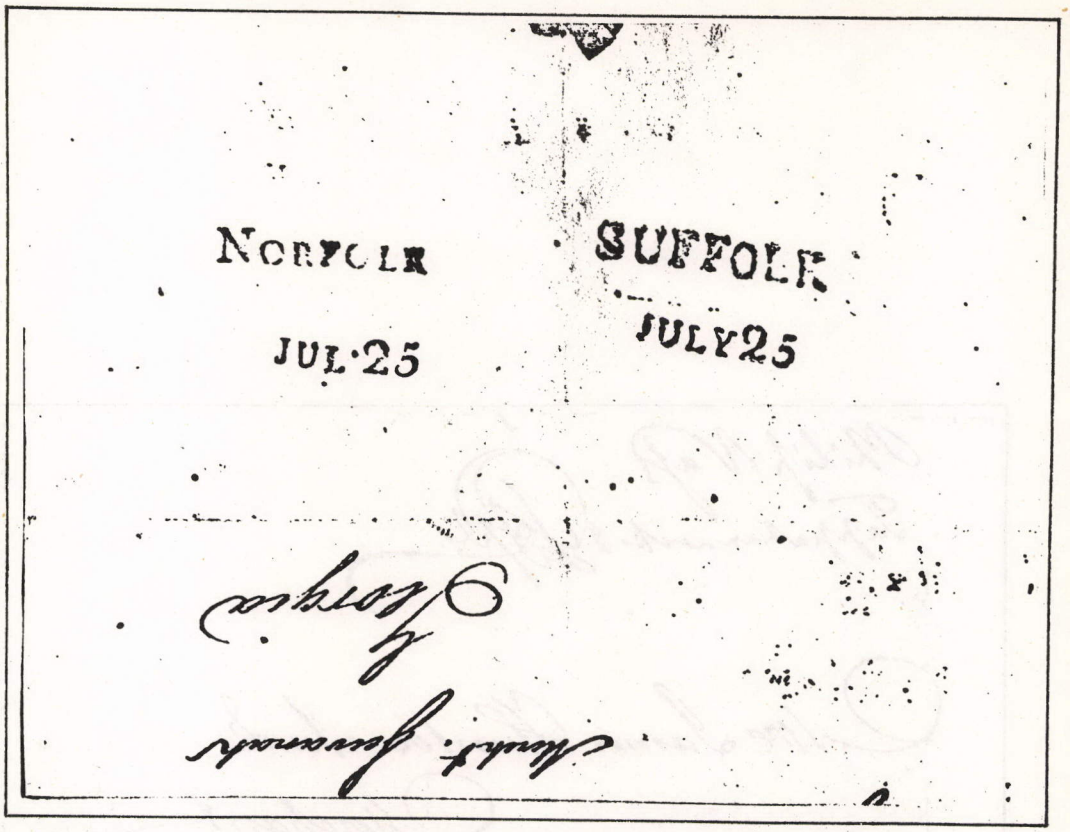


VA 26. Smithf(iel)d, September 22, 1779, to Williamsburg, 6 dwts. (Huntington Library, San Marino. HM 3157).

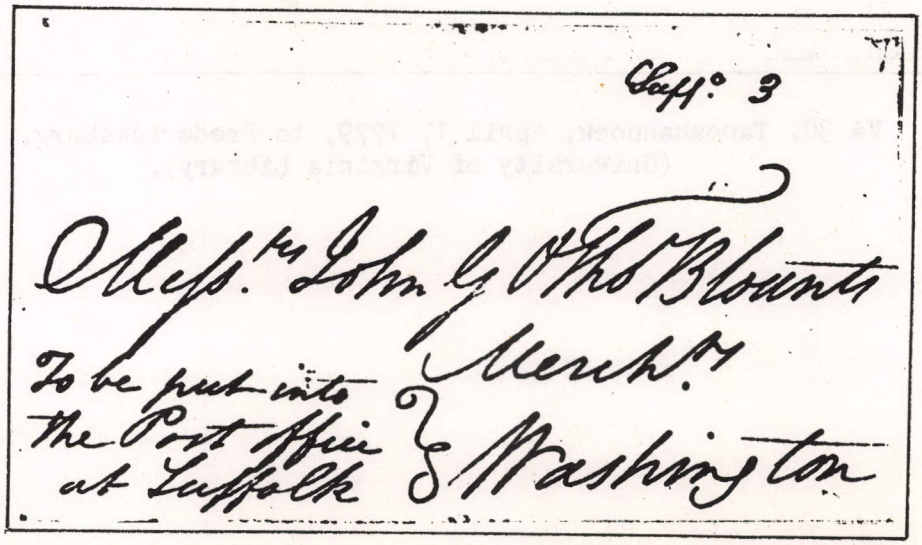


VA 27. Suffolk, from Charlestown, S.C., November 5, 1756, to Albany, 20 dwts. On His Majestys especial Service. (Huntington Library, San Marino).

VIRGINIA

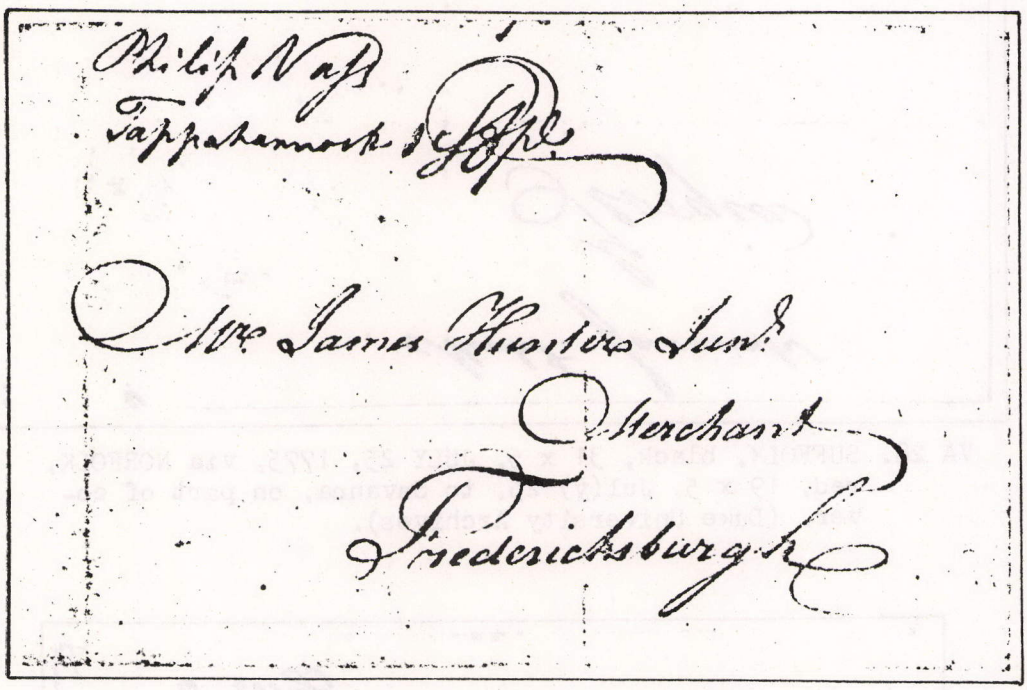


VA 28. SUFFOLK, black, 31 x 5, JULY 25, 1775, via NORFOLK, red, 19 x 5, Jul(y) 25, to Savanna, on part of cover. (Duke University Archives).



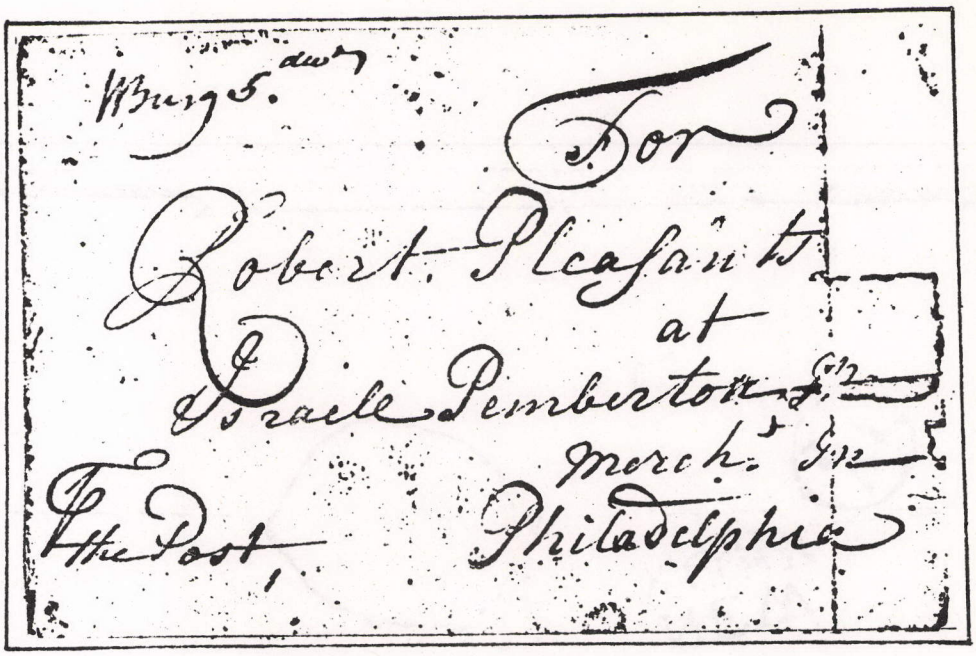
VA 29. Suff°(lk), from Portsmouth, Va. August 20, 1783, to Washington, N.C., 3 dwts. (North Carolina State Archives).

VIRGINIA

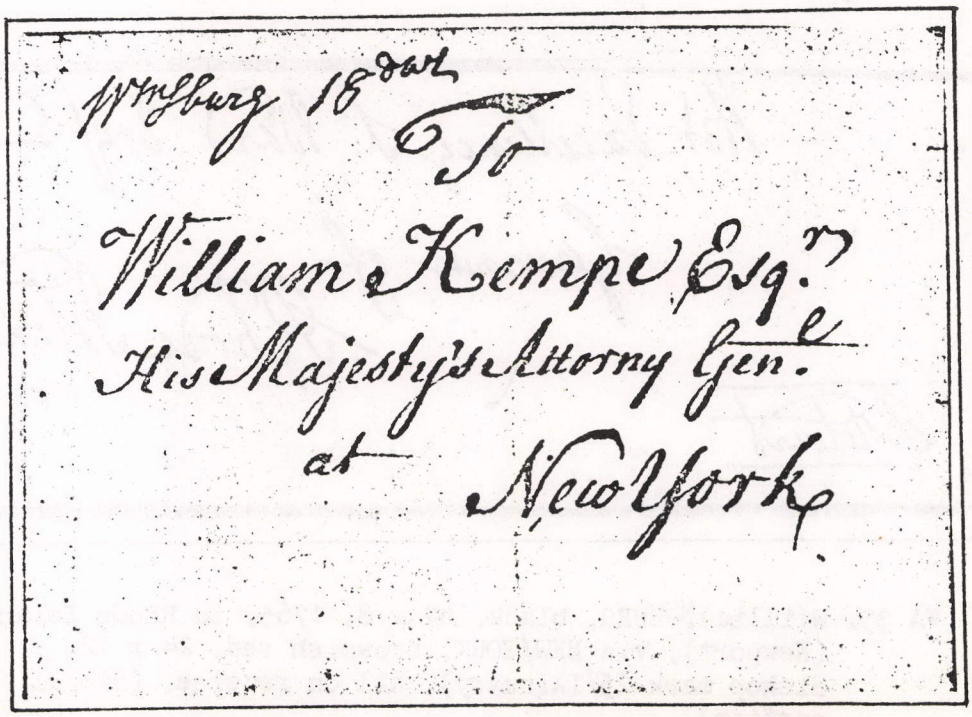


VA 30. Tappahannock, April 1, 1779, to Fredericksburg. (University of Virginia Library).

VIRGINIA

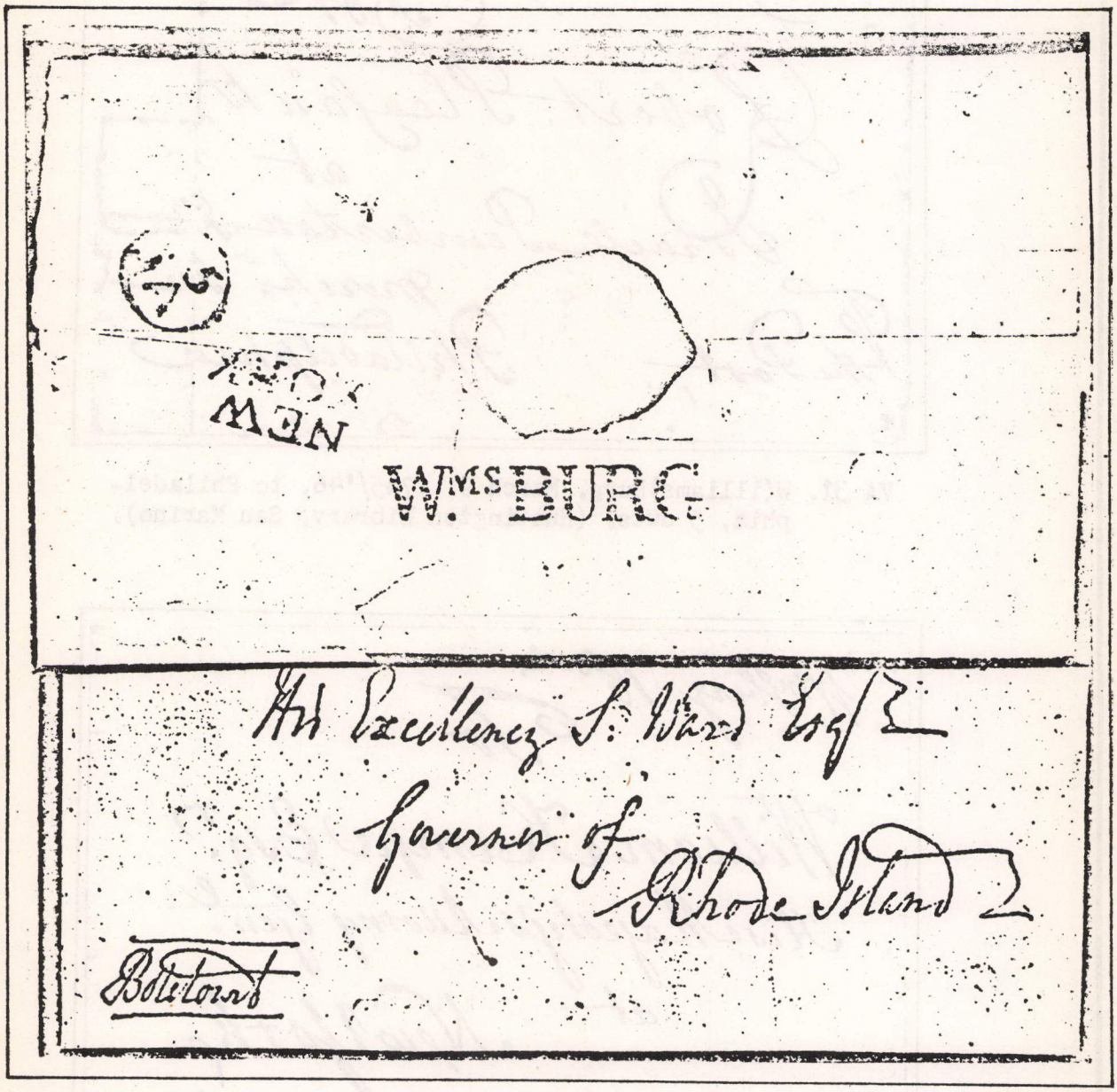


VA 31. W(illiams)Burg, March 9, 1745/'46, to Philadelphia, 5 dwts. (Huntington Library, San Marino).



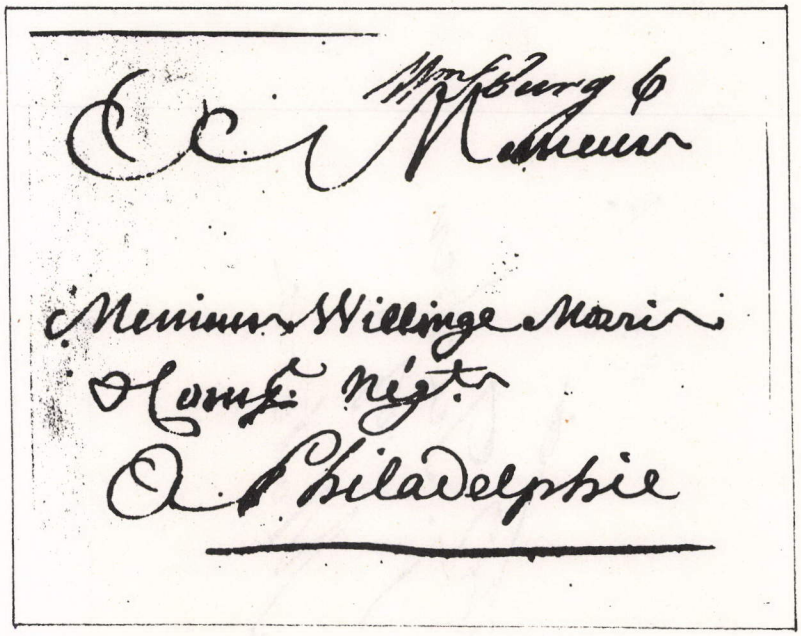
VA 32. W(illia)^{m}sburg, December 29, 1755, to New York, 18 dwts. (Massachusetts Historical Society).

VIRGINIA

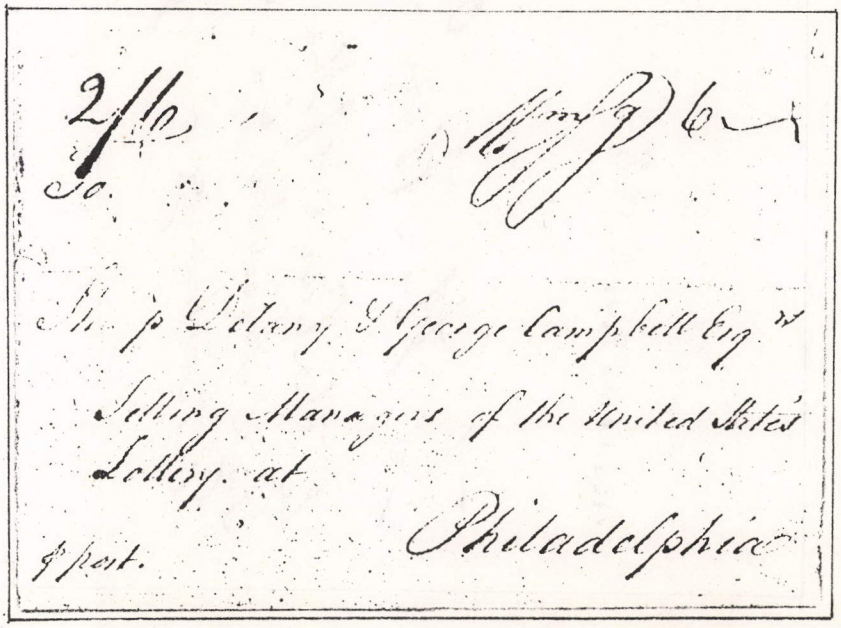


VA 33. W(illia)MSBURG, black, 47 x 8, 1765, to Rhode Island (Newport), via NEW/YORK, brownish red, 24 x 12, Bishop mark 25/IA(nuary), all on reverse. (Siegel auction).

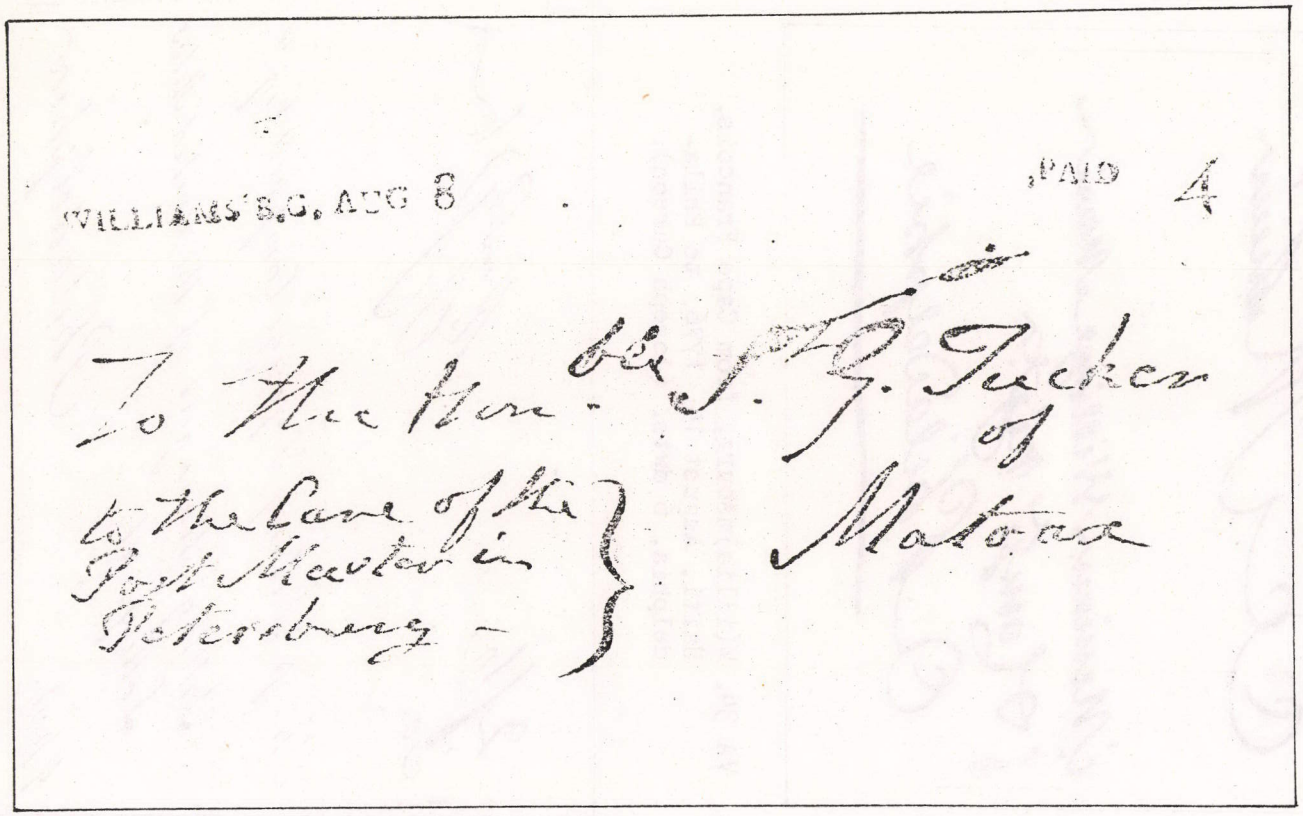
VIRGINIA



VA 34. W(illia)msburg, from Cape Francois, Haiti, August 14, 1776, to Philadelphia, 6 dwts. (Joseph Carson).

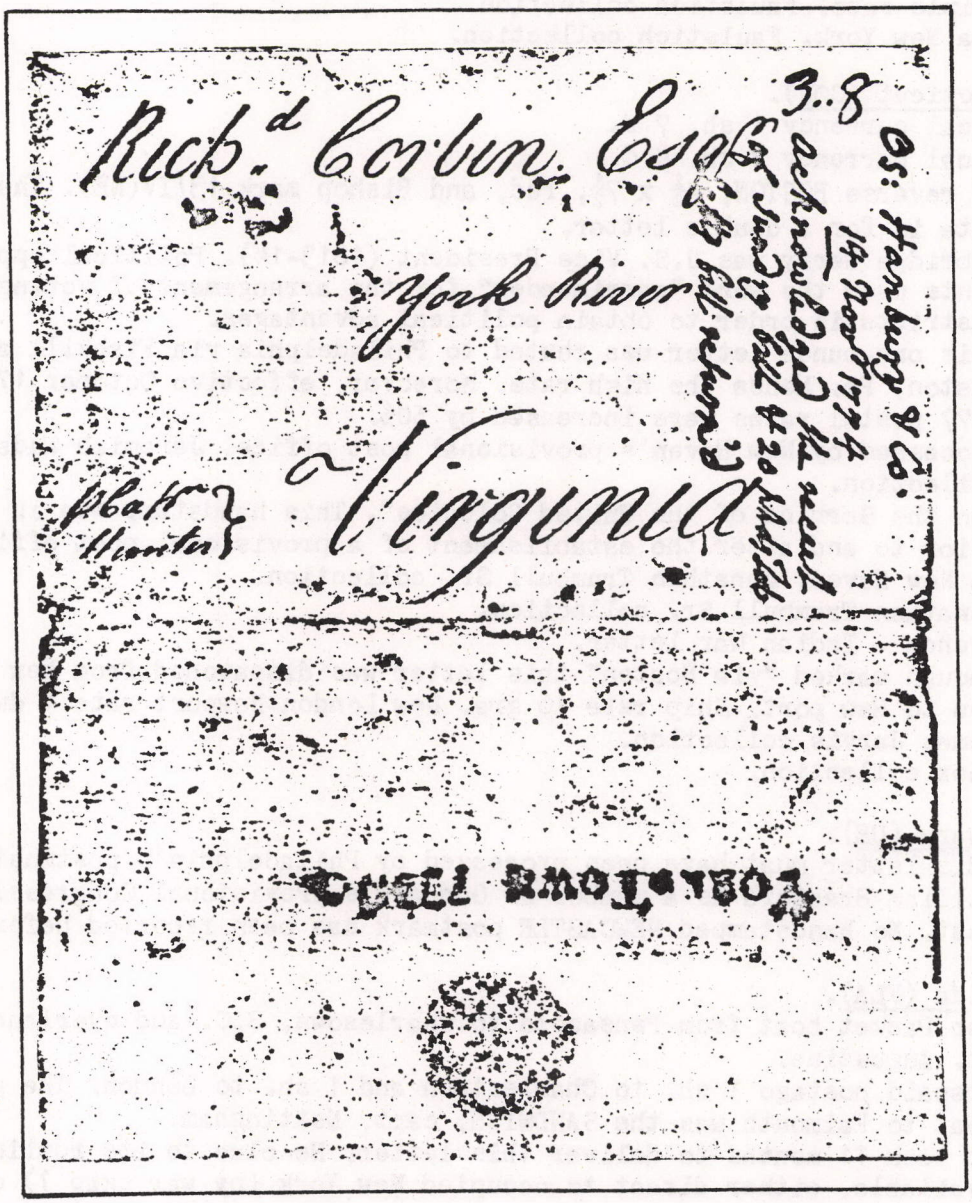


VA 35. W(illiam)s(bur)g, to Philadelphia, October 28, 1778, 6 dwts. 2/6 local currency. (Reported by E.N.Sampson).



VA 36. WILLIAMS'B.(ur)G., black, 29 x 3, AUG(ust) 8, from Rose-well Plantation, July 12, 1788, to Matoax Va., PAID 4 dwts. To the care of the postmaster in Petersburg. (William & Mary College).

VIRGINIA



VA 37. YORK*TOWN, black, 41 x 5, FEB(ruary) 4, all on reverse. From London, November 14, 1774, to York River, Va. 3 dwts, 8 gr. (Colonial Williamsburg Archives).

Explanatory Notes.

Canada (CA).

1. Local currency 10d.
6. Double rate. Local currency 4 sh. Written shortly before withdrawal of the Patriot Forces. Varrick collection.
8. Triple rate. Faulstich collection.
9. Via New York. Faulstich collection.

Connecticut (CON).

2. Local currency 1 sh. 7 d.
3. Local currency 2 sh. 4 d.
4. On reverse BOSTON, $4\frac{1}{2}$ x $7\frac{1}{2}$, red, and Bishop mark 13/IV(NE). The rate is for a double letter.
5. Elbridge Gerry was U.S. Vice President (1813-14). Political opponents used the word "gerrimander" for the arrangement of voting districts in order to obtain political advantages.
6. This one-ounce letter was routed to Philadelphia via Fishkill and Easton, Pa. Hence the high rate. Moreover, effective October 17, 1777 postal rates were increased by 50%.
10. Processed by New Haven's provisional post office. Jeremiah Wadsworth Collection.
11. "On the Service of the United Colonies". This handstamp was in use prior to and after the establishment of a provisional post office in New Haven. Jonathan Trumbull Sr. collection.
12. Jonathan Trumbull Sr. collection.
14. French - Indian War letter.
15. Though marked "via Boston" this letter was dispatched from New London to New port. Ship rate 16 grs. New London-Newport rate 1 dwt. 8 gr.
17. James Jarvis collection.
20. Knox collection.

Delaware (DE).

1. This letter must have been processed by Philadelphia's postmaster William Bradford as a member of Goddard's provisional Congressional post. No handstamped NEWCASTLE postmark has been reported before.

Florida (FLA).

1. Per Packet boat from Pensacola to Charlesown, S.C. and overland to St. Augustine.
2. Prepaid postage 1 sh. to Charlestown and 1 sh. to London. The packet boat to Falmouth was the SANDWICH, capt. Nottingham.
3. It took 11 months to deliver this letter. No clue to its routing is available, either direct to occupied New York (by war sgip ?) or via England.

Georgia (GA).

1. Georgia did not use the Troy monetary system for rating the mail. Faulstich collection.

1A. Reverse of 1.

Maine (ME).

1. Maine remained a district of Massachusetts until 1820. Written in Georgetown, April 4, 1786.

2. Slightly enlarged copy. The name Falmouth was changed to Portland on July 4, 1786. (Sterling T. Dow: The Origin of Portland, Maine, Post Office. Mekeel's Weekly, September 2, 1946).

Maryland (MD).

1. Though delivered at the Annapolis post office by private hand, it is not a ship letter for which the captain's fee could have been claimed.
2. Postmaster William Whitcroft.
3. 1 Dwt. 16 grs. was the correct rate for Annapolis-Harford Town. It must remain unexplained why the rate was changed to 2 dwts.
4. This ia 1788 letter.
5. Whitmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
6. 1 sh. 4 d. local currency.
7. Apparently received in Baltimore under cover
9. Processed in Baltimore by the provisional post office.
10. The first handstamped Baltimore townmark as an American Congress post office. It has not been reported before.
11. Local currency 3 sh. 6 d.
12. Local currency 1 sh. 3 d.
12a. Congress increased the 1775 rates by 50%. Baltimore - Boston old rate 4 dwts. 16 grs. $1\frac{1}{2}$ x 4.16 = 7 dwts. Double rate 14 dwts. This Baltimore townmark has not been reported before.
13. From the Faulstich collection..
18. From the Faulstich collection.
19. From the Faulstich collection.
20. William Tilghman collection.
21. Joppa, located on the road from Baltimore to Philadelphia, had a royal post office in 1765.
23. From Queen Anne to Newtown and per ship to Philadelphia.
24. From Talbot (present Easton) to Chestertown, where Tilghman lived, forwarded to Philadelphia.
25. Reverse of a cover.

Massachusetts (MA).

1. Belknap Papers.
2. Forwarded from Boston.
3. French-Indian war letter.
5. Mailed during Boston's occupation by British forces. Postage in sterling. This marking was used as late as August 4, 1776.
7. The year could have been 1784. No postage. Rogers Papers.
9. A one ounce letter, rated 4 x 2.16 = 10 dwts. 16 grs. plus 16 grs. ship rate = 11 dwts. 8 grs.
11. Jonathan Trumbull Papers.
13. Processed by Goddard's provisional Cngressional post. Massachusetts rate 10 d. $\frac{1}{2}$. Postmaster James Winthrop.
15. Witmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
16. Local currency 2 sh. 2 d.
17. Forwarded from Boston. (See last page of these Notes).
19. Local currency 11 d. Witmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
22. Forwarded from Salem by Joseph Joshua Grafton. Salem townmark is in greenish black and not in red, as erroneously reported.
23. Sedgewick Papers.

New Hampshire (NH).

1. Griswold Papers.
3. It is not certain that "P" is a town marking. It could stand for "Paid". On reverse BOSTON, red, 43½ x 7½. Bishop mark 15/AV(GUST).
5. Belknap Papers.

New Jersey (NJ).

6. Processed by Goddard's provisional Congressional post. Postmaster Baldwin. Double letter. Rate -N8 = 8 d. = 2 dwts. 16 grs. Local currency 9 d. Andre de Coppet collection.
7. In 1779 Congress multiplied rates of 1775 by 20. Total postage 20 x 4 dwts. 16 grs. = 93 dwts. 8 grs. Addressed to the future Vice President of the U.S.
9. A French Indian war letter. HM 4619.
10. From Faulstich collection.
11. From Faulstich collection.
12. Private post. Per stage boat to Bordentown, from there per coach to Hyden town. From Faulstich collection.

New York (NY).

1. A French Indian war letter. HM 4554.
2. A French Indian war letter. HM 5446.
3. From Quebec under French administration. Postage apparently prepaid to Albany.
4. Earliest Albany handstamped town marking seen so far. Sedgewick Papers.
5. From Rensselaerwyck to Poughkeepsie via Albany. Varvick Papers.
6. Postage 12 d., according to the rate schedule established under Hamilton's postamster generalship.
7. Double letter charged 2 sh. for New York - Boston, 1 sh. for Boston-Newport, 2 x incoming plus 2 x outgoing ship letter rates, or a total of 8 sh. 4 d.
8. The first colonial town marking.
11. Witmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
12. Processed by the provisional Congressional post. Witmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
13. Double letter.
13a. Knop collection.
14. Knop collection.
16. The first handstamped New York marking after the British occupation.
18. Franked by William Blount, North Carolina Delegate to Congress.
20. Jonathan Trumbull Papers.
21. Jonathan Trumbull Papers.
22. From Faulstich collection.
23. Arrived in New York a few weeks before the city was occupied by the British Army. Jos Trumbull collection.

North Carolina (NC).

3. Earliest handstamped town marking of North Carolina. It has not been reported before.
6. From Jamaica, B.W.I. to Savanna per brigt. SALLY, capt. Benjamin Cozens. Arrival December 28, 1768 (Georgia Gazette, January 5, 1769). Rate interpretation by Robson Lowe: 2 dwts. 16 grs. paid to Capt. Gozens upon arrival in Savanna. Rate Savanna - Charlestown

16 grs. Rate due in Charlestown 3 dwts. 8 grs. Three stages by ship: Charlestown - Wilmington, N.C. - New York - Newport, or 3 x 4 d. = 1 sh. or 4 dwts. Total rate 7 dwts. 8 grs.

Pennsylvania (PA).

1. Western frontier post during French Indian war.
2. Western frontier post during French Indian war. HM 4410.
6. Town marking by Benjamin Franklin.
8. French Indian war letter. HM 3261.
12. Probably handstamped by Philadelphia postmaster, William Bradford, during Goddard's provisional Congressional post. Witmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
13. Provisional Congressional post letter. Witmore collection of Rhode Island Commerce.
14. Early Congressional post letter.
15. Dispatched by postmaster Peter Baynton to Providence via Easton, Pa. and Fishkill, N.Y.
16. Franked by Robert Morris, signer of the Declaration of Independence. Later Secretary of Finance. HM 9932.
17. Franked by Charles Thompson, Secretary of Congress. Meshech Weare Papers.

Rhode Island (RI).

1. Double letter. Single rate Newport - Boston 2 dwts.
2. "These to Mr. ... present." See A. Introduction.
3. French Indian war letter. HM 2317.
4. Double letter.
5. Newport handstamped the incoming mail.
7. Postmaster Solomon Smithwick.

(See last page of these Notes).

South Carolina (SC).

1. Double letter by packet.
2. Only known pre-statehood circular American townmark, used 1778-1780. Not used during British occupation of the city. Congress increased 1775 postal rates by 50% in 1777. Double letter, hence rate 14 dwts.

Virginia (VA).

1. Early August 1774 a Virginia convention chose George Washington, together with Richard Henry Lee and Patrick Henry as the colony's representatives to the 1st Continental Congress, which convened September 5th. While in Philadelphia Washington received this letter from one of his farm overseeers. Rate Alexandria - Philadelphia 3 dwts. 8 grs.
2. Alexandria's postmaster Josiah Watson must have been misinformed about the Alexandria - Philadelphia single rate. In August 1776 he rated this letter 2 dwts. a6 grs. instead of 3 dwts. 8 grs.
3. James Hunter Papers.
4. James Hunter Papers.
5. Franked by postmaster Richard Graham in Dumfries. James Hunter Papers.
6. The 1772 rate Fredericksburg, Va. - Newport, R.I. was 5 dwts, 8 grs. Sedgewick papers.

7. Townmark of a type not reported before. Probably late provisional Congressional use, also substantiated by rate marking in sterling.
8. John Page assisted Jefferson in framing the Declaration of Independence.
10. James Hunter was Deputy Quartermaster General in Fredericksburg during the revolutionary war. Hunter Papers.
11. General Washington continued to have the franking privilege after the war. HM 5051.
12. Hunter Papers.
13. Hampton was Virginia's main port. John Hatley Norton headed the Virginia branch of the Britsh merchant firm John Norton & Sons.
14. Tucker-Coleman Papers.
15. A double letter.
17. A double letter. Rate 2 x 1 dwt. 8 gr. = 2.16 plus 16 grs. ship letter rate.
18. James Hunter Papers.
19. James Hunter Papers.
21. Postmaster was George Tankerslie.
22. In December 1779 Congress raised the rates of 1775 multiplying them by 20. James Hunter Papers.
25. Mataox in Amalia County. Tucker-Coleman Papers.
27. A double letter. HM 2162.
28. Norfolk's post office joined Goddard's provisional Congressional post in 1775. (See also VA 17). William Davis was postmaster.
30. James Hunter Papers.
31. In 1746 the Williamsburg - Philadelphia rate was 4 dwts. Box 12.
32. A triple letter. Sedgewick Papers.
33. Letter by Virginia Governor Botetourt. From the Faulstich collection.
34. Probably a ship letter. Ship rate 16 grs. Hampton - Williamsburg rate 1 dwt. 8 grs. Williamsburg - Philadelphia 4 dwts.
35. In October 1777 Congress increased the 1775 rates by 50%, hence 4 + 2 = 6 dwts.
36. The pre-statehood period ended September 22, 1788. Tucker-Coleman Papers.
37. Probably a ship letter. Ship rate 16 grs. Hampton - Yorktown 1 dwt. 8 grs. Double letter 2 dwts. 16 grs. Total 3 dwts. 8 grs.

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Index.

Accounting, M-7, -11.
Adams, Samuel, H-4, -16, J-1, R-2.
Aesophus, C-7, F-5.
Albany, N.Y., C-17, F-5, P-4.
American Bottom, V-1.
American Letterbook, M-9, -13.
Annapolis, Md. C-18, O-9, -15.
Anne, Queen, B-7, -10, -37, D-6, E-4, -6, S-3.
Antill, John, P.M. New York, F-37, T-4.
Army Post, B-17.
Army Post Office, U.
Arnold, Benedict, A-9, C-17.

Bache, Richard, P.M.General, B-14, H-16.
Baltimore, C-18, O-18, W-4.
Baltimore, Lord, B-3, O-3.
Barons, Benjamin, Dep.P.M.Gen. South, B-11, N-13.
Barter, I-2.
Baynton, Wharton & Morgan, V-3.
Beaufort,S.C., F-28.
Benedict Leonard Town, Md., O-9.
Benger, Elliot, Dep.P.M.Gen. C-22, L-8, M-2.
Berthier, Can. P-15.
Bic, Can. P-11.
Bissell, Israel, Express, J-2.
Blackwell, P.M. Pensacola, Fla. Q-17.
Bladensburg, Md. O-18.
Bookkeeping, B-24, -28.
Bordenton Stage, B-40.
Bonnetheau, Peter, P.M. Charlestown, S.C., N-13.
Bourns, Edward, P.M. Charlestown, S.C. N-5.
Braddock, Gen. Edward, B-33, F-30, U-1.
Bradford, William, P.M. Philadelphia, B-10, -29, O-12.
Bristol Packet, F-25.
British West Indies, F-24.
Brooker, William, P.M. Boston, C-23.
Burd, James, U-2.
Burlington Stage, B-41.

Cahokia, Ill. V-2.
Campbell, John, P.M.Boston, B-29.
Canada, A-4, B-11, P.
Cape Fear, N.C. N-5.
Carriers, B-32.
Cash, B-16.
Charlestown, S.C. A-9, C-22, D-17, F-43, -49, R-6, V-11, N.
Charlestown, S.C., British occupation, N-14.
Charlestown Packetm C-25.
Charles Town, Md. W-10.
Chaudière River, Can. A-7.
Christiana, Pa. W-5.
Circular townmark, Charlestown, S.C. N-16.
Coastwise Mail, C-24, E-9, F-37.
Coffee Houses, D-17, -27, -45, K-8, O-4.
Coins, B-26, I-2, -5.
Colden, Alexander, P.M. New York, B-14, M-10, T-3, P-2.
Colden, Richard C., B-14, T-4.
Committee of Correspondence, B-8, H-6, J-6, -9, L-14, R.
Committee of Safety, J-1, L-19.
Comptroller, B-12, M-2, -8.
Confederation, Articles of, B-9, E-14.
Constables, B-1, C-2.
Constitutional Post Office, H-4, O-25, R-6.
Continental Congress, R-3.
Cornbury, Lord, O-10.
Credit, B-26, D-47.
Croft, Abraham, P.M. Charlestown, S.C. N-4.

Cromwell, Oliver, F-15, -17, G-2.
Cross Road, B-10.
Crown Point, N.Y. P-4.
Currency, B-26, D-10, I.

Davis, James, postrider, C-24.
Declaration of Independence, T-1.
Delancey, Peter, Dep.P.M.Gen. South, B-11, N-13.
Delaware River, C-13, -18.
Depreciation, B-16, D-29, I-7.
Dixon, John, P.M. Williamsburg, L-11.
Dockwra, William, D-45, W-7.
Documentation, A-2.
Dollar, Spanish, E-14, L-2, -8.
Dummer, Edmund, F-22.
Dutch West India Company, D-1, E-1, F-1, L-21.

Easton, Pa, C-16, F-43.
Edenton, N.C., C-28, L-12, O-13.
Ellis, John, Agent for W. Florida, Q-19.
Errors, A-5, -11.
Exempt Mail, B-32, -37, E-10, G-19, H-4, L-19.
Express, B-32, -34, C-27, K-6, V-4, J.
Express Rates, B-23, D-9, -50.

Fairbanks, Richard, P.M. Boston, B-1, -31.
Falmouth, Engl. F-32, -43, -48.
Farris, William, post rider, N-4.
Fee, captain's, B-6, E-2, -8.
Fee, publication, A-5.
Ferries, C-28.
Fidling, Francis, P.M. Charlestown, S.C., N-2.
Finlay, Hugh,
P.M. Canada, P-1, -7.
Surveyor, A-8, -11, B-14, -31, C-27, M-10, N-12, P-5, Q-8.
Fishkill, N.Y. C-16, F-43.
Florida, A-4, B-11, C-25, -32, F-47, -50, Q.
Florida, Division of, Q-1.
Fort Chartres, Ill, V-2.
Fort Cumberland, Va., U-4, V-4.
Fort Duquesne, Pa. F-30, U-1.
Fort Pitt, Pa. V-3.
Foxcroft, John, Dep.P.M.Gen. B-8, -11, H-7, M-8, P-4.
Franco, F-21.
Franking, D-29, M-6.
Franklin, Benjamin, B-7, -10, -14, -33, -47, D-6, F-34, -52, H-2, -16, L-9, P-2, T-4, P-2, M.
Franklin, William, Comptroller, O-17.
Fredericksburg, Va. L-20.
Fredericktown, Md., O-18, U-1.
French Packet Service, F-37, G.

George III, King, F-22.
Georgetown, S.C., N-9.
Georgia, C-25, N-13.
Goddard, Katherine, P.M.Baltimore, H-5.
Goddard, William G., B-8, -14, D-10, F-37, L-15, M-2, -10, O-24, H.
Gray, Edward W., P.M.Montreal, P-20.
Great Carrying Place, Me., A-8.
Green,Jones, P.M.Annapolis, O-15.

Haley, John., P.M.St.Augustine, Q-16.
Halifax, N.C. C-28.
Halifax, Nova Scotia, F-41, M-10, P-22.
Hamilton, Alexander, S-6.
Hamilton, Andrew, B-6, -25, C-10, -20, D-4, -45, L-2, O-7.
Hamilton, John. B-10, O-12.
Hampton, Va. L-10, O-13.
Hancock, Thomas, M-4.
Handstamps, B-25.
Hayward, John. P.M.Boston. B-4, C-5
Hazard, Ebenezer, B-11, F-39, -52, G-10, J-13, O-29, T-4, -7.

Hillsborough, Lord, First Secretary, C-25.
Holt, John, P.M. and Printer, D-14, H-17, T-4.
Hooper, William, P.M. Wilmington, N.C. C-27.
Horns, Post. M-8.
Horses. B-33.
Hubbart, Thomas, P.M.Boston., M-10.
Hudson River. C-5.
Hunter, William, Dep.P.M.Gen. B-7, -11, -47, L-9, M-2.

Illinois. V-2.
Instructions to Postmasters. B-18, -42.
Inter-colonial post. K-5.
Intra-colonial post. B-9, C-2.

James City, Va. B-3, K-9, L-1.
Jeffries, Sir. F-25.
Joppa, Md. O-13.

Kaskaskia, Ill. V-2.
Kennebunk River. A-7.

Latin, use of. C-8.
Laurens, Henry, Pres.of Continental Congress., C-2.
Le Despencer, Lord Francis, Postmaster General, M-5.
Lexington, J-1.
Loudoun, Earl, C.i.C. British Forces. French-Indian War. B-36, F-34.
Lovelace, Francis, Gov. N.Y. A-11, B-4, -18, C-1.
Lynch, Head, Dep.P.M.Gen. C-22, L-8.

Mackenfuss, postrider, B-31, Q-8.
Mailbox. F-9, O-23.
Maitres de Poste. P-9.
Maps:
American Bottom, V-2.
Braddock's Campaign in 1755, U-4.
Canada in 1776. P-26.
East Florida in 1776. Q-8.
Express Ride by Bissell, J-8.
Falmouth, Me.-Quebec, A-7.
Maps (Cont.).
Florida in 1763. Q-2.
French Packet Ports. G-5.
James Citie-St.Maries in 1638. B-3.
Manhattan in 1776. T-2.
Maryland Post Roads. C-19.
Maryland in 1635. O-2.
Maryland Post Roads in 1728. O-13.
Maryland Post Roads in 1757. O-18.
Maryland-Philadelphia 1770-1776. W-6.
New England. C-11.
New Jersey's Post Roads. C-14.
North Carolina Post Roads. C-28.
Packet Lines to Florida and South Carolina. F-49.
Philadelphia-Boston 1776-1783. C-16.
Plymouth Area 1633, Constable as Carriers. C-3.
South Carolina Post Roads in 1774. C-34.
Virginia's Post Roads in 1766. L-13.
Wicomico, Md. to Philadelphia in 1695. O-10.
Markings, B-25, Part II.
Markings, French. G-31.
Markings, New York. T-8.
Marlborough, Md. O-13.
Maryland. K-4, O.
Massaponax, Va. C-21.
Mast Fleet. F-15.
Measam, George. P.M.Momtreal. P-24.
Michaelius, Rev. J. F-1.
Midwout, N.Neth. D-1, F-5, -10, -18.
Mississippi boats. V-5.
Mississippi River. V-1.
Mobile, Fla. V-11.
Moll, Herman, Cartographer. C-10, S-6.
Money, paper. I-2.
Monopoly, postal. B-7, -9, -10, F-35.
Montgomerey, Gen. Richard. P-23.
Montreal. P-2.
Morgantown, N.J. C-17.

Morris, Robert H. Gov. Pa. U-2.
Moultrie, John. Gov. Fla. Q-6.
Mumford, postrider. B-31.
Murray, James. Gov. Can. P-4.

Neale, Thomas. B-4, K-1.
New Amsterdam. C-8, F-1.
New Brunswick, N.J. C-13.
New Castle, Pa. C-5, -18, D-3, K-6, O-9.
New Jersey. B-10, C-12.
New Orange. F-18.
New Orleans. V-5.
Newpost, Md. O-18.
Newpost, Va. C-21, O-13.
Newspapers, B-29.
New Smyrna, Fla. Q-7.
New Sweden. B-4, C-8, -14, F-8, -13.
New Town, Md. W-2.
New York. T.
Norfolk, Va. L-10.
Norona, Delf. C-10.
Norridgewock, Me. A-7.
North Carolina. C-24, K-4.
Nova Scotia. P-22.

Oath. B-21.
Oswega, N.Y. U-6.

Packet, transatlantic. D-17, F-30, O-3, -17, Q-2, -12, -18, V-11. F.
Palmer, Gen. Joseph. J-1.
Parker, James, Comptroller. B-13, -22, D-39, M-2, P-20.
Parker, Mrs. Mary. M-9.
Parks, William, P.M.Williamsburg. C-2, L-8, O-12.
Patapsco, Md. O-13.
Penny Post. D-45, E-14, N-5, W-7.
Pensacola, Fla. B-25, F-44, -50, Q-1, V-1, -9.
Perry, John, post rider, O-9.
Perth Amboy, N.J. C-15.
Philadelphia, Pa. V-8.
Phillips, Eleazer, P.M.Gen. South. N-13.
Piscataqua, N.H. S.
Piscataway, Md. O-18.
Piscataway, N.H. K-6, S.
Piscataway, N.J. C-13.
Portsmouth, N.H. S-2.
Port Tobacco, Md. O-18.
Postage (see Rates).
Postal Routes. O-10, -13, -18.
Postmaster. B.
Postmasters, Constitutional Post. H-11, -15.
Postmaster's Shortcomings. B-26.
Post Office. O-22. B.
Post Office Acts.
1639 Massachusetts. B-1.
1657/8 Virginia. C-2, L-3.
1661 Maryland. O-5.
1711 Queen Anne. B-7, D-6.
1775 Continental Congress. T-5.
Post Offices, Constitutional Post. H-14.
Post Office, Location. B-31.
Post Office General. C-32.
Post Paid. D-16, -28, W-4.
Post Roads. C-3, -11, -14, -16, -19, -24, -28.
Pownall, John. Secr. P.M.Gen. London. O-15.
Pratt, Henry, postrider. C-2, O-14.
Prepaid Postage. D-16, F-52, O-17, -20, Q-11, W-7.
Printz, Johan, Gov.N.Swed. B-4, F-8.
Purdie, Alexander. P.M.Williamsburg. L-12.

Quebec. A-6, -9, B-7, C-25, M-10, P-2.

Randolph Payton, Va. Comm. of Corr. L-16, R-6.
Raritan River. C-13.
Rate Tables.
1711. B-23.
1754. D-8.
1763. D-9.
1765. D-50.
1775. Back of Cover.
Rates. A-10, B-22, D.
Rates, French. G-9, -26.
Rates, Newspapers. B-30.
Rates, Shipletters. E-7.

Rates, Transatlantic. D-1, -18, L-16.
Rates, Troy. B-26.
Remittance. B-7, M-9.
Rensselaerwijck. C-6, F-5.
Revere, Paul. J-1.
Riders, B-15, -17, -31.
Rhode Island. K-4.
Robberies. B-37.
Roupell, George, Dep.P.M.Gen. South. B-11, N-12.
Royle, Joseph, P.M.Williamsburg. L-10.

Saco, Me. C-3.
Salary, M-9.
Sandwich, John, Earl of, P.M. General, M-8.
Sasafras River, Md. A-5.
Savannah, Ga. A-11, B-25, C-33, F-45, N-11, Q-15, R-6.
Schenectady, N.Y. K-7.
Schuyler, Gen. Philip. P-23.
Secretary, Gen. P.O. B-12.
Shepheard, Charles, P.M.Charlestown, S.C. N-6.
Ship Letters. F-37, G-3. E.
Southern Mail. C-1.
Shippen, Edward. U-2.
Shippensburg, Pa. U-2.
Smith, William, P.M.Charlestown, S.C. N-2.
Spanish coin. I-1.
Spotswood, Alexander, Gov.Va. Dep.P.M.Gen. B-8, -10, -14, -30, C-1, -15, -20, D-6, E-12, L-7, O-13.
Stage Coach. B-38, -40.
Stamp Act. M-5.
St.Augustine, Fla. A-10, C-31, Q-1.
Stephenson, John. P.M.Pensacola, Fla, Q-17, V-9.
Sterling. I-1, T-9.
St.Eustatius, D.W.I. F-39, -43, L-19.
St.Mary's, Md. B-3, O-1.
Stretch, John. P.M.Williamsburg. L-9.
Stuyvesant, Peter. F-5, -13, -17.
Suffolk, Va. C-25, -28.
Surveyor, B-14.
Susquehanna, Md. C-22, O-13.

Tappan Zee, N.Y. T-2.
Taverns. D-1, -17, -45.
Temoka Cowper, Fla. Q-10.
Three Rivers, Can. P-2, -7, -26.
Ticonderoga, N.Y. P-23.
Timothy, Peter, P.M.Charleston, S.C. E-7, F-47, N-6, U-1.
Tinicum Island, Pa. C-14.
Tobacco Fleet. E-2, L-1, -6.
Todd, Anthony, Secr. to P.M. Gen. M-8, -11, P-4.
Transatlantic Mail. V-11, F. G.
Transportation. B-33, F-20, V-5.
Treaty of Paris. V-1.
Trenton, N.J. C-5, D-3.
Trevor, Robert. Brit.Reveiver Gen. M-8, -12.
Trois Pistoles, Can. P-11, -26.
Troy, N.Y. D-6, -10, -14, T-9.
Trumbull, Gov. Jonathan. F-41.
Tryon, Gov. William. C-24.
Turkey Foot, Pa. U-2.

Upper Marlborough, Md. O-18.

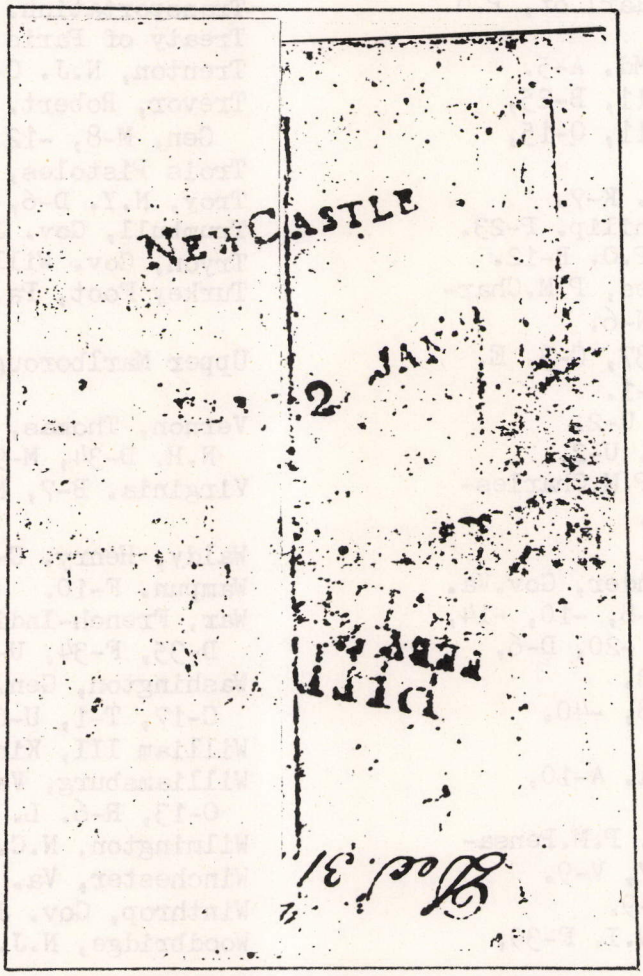
Vernon, Thomas, P.M.Newport, N.H. D-34, M-9.
Virginia. B-7, K-4, O-7, L.

Waldy, Henry. C-5, D-3.
Wampun. F-10.
War, French-Indian. B-33, C-23, D-35, F-34, U-1.
Washington, Gen.George. B-34, C-17, T-1, U-6.
William III, King. K-1.
Williamsburg, Va. C-22, H-10, O-13, R-6. L.
Wilmington, N.C. C-22.
Winchester, Va. U-6.
Winthrop, Gov. John. C-9, O-3.
Woodbridge, N.J. C-13.

York River, L-1.
York-Town, Va. O-13.

Erratum.

On second thought, initiated by Calvet M. Hahn (The Collectors Club Philatelist, January, 1975, p. 42), the NEWCASTLE townmark on a February 2, 1775 cover from Philadelphia to Hanover County, Virginia is erroneously listed in Part II. Instead of having been marked in the Delaware post office of that name, it was handled and hand-stamped by the postmaster of NewCastle in Virginia. This township was located north of Richmond. It had a postoffice in 1771, according to Horowicz and Lowe (The Colonial Posts, p. 38), but it was mentioned earlier in the Virginia Gazette of May 28, 1767 in a Williamsburg office announcement, dated May 8.



NewCastle appeared to be the starting point for post riders in several directions: to Williamsburg in the east, to Petersburg in the south, via Richmond, and to Fredericksburg in the north, via Hanover Town and Todd's Bridge. As a post office of some importance it had superceded Hanover Town.

Erratum.

Further research on two covers illustrated in Part II and listed as having originated in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, has revealed that both letters were mailed from Elizabethtown, New Jersy.

The letter addressed to the Earl of Loudoun was written by Robert Morris, one of the signers of the Declaration of independence.

TABLES

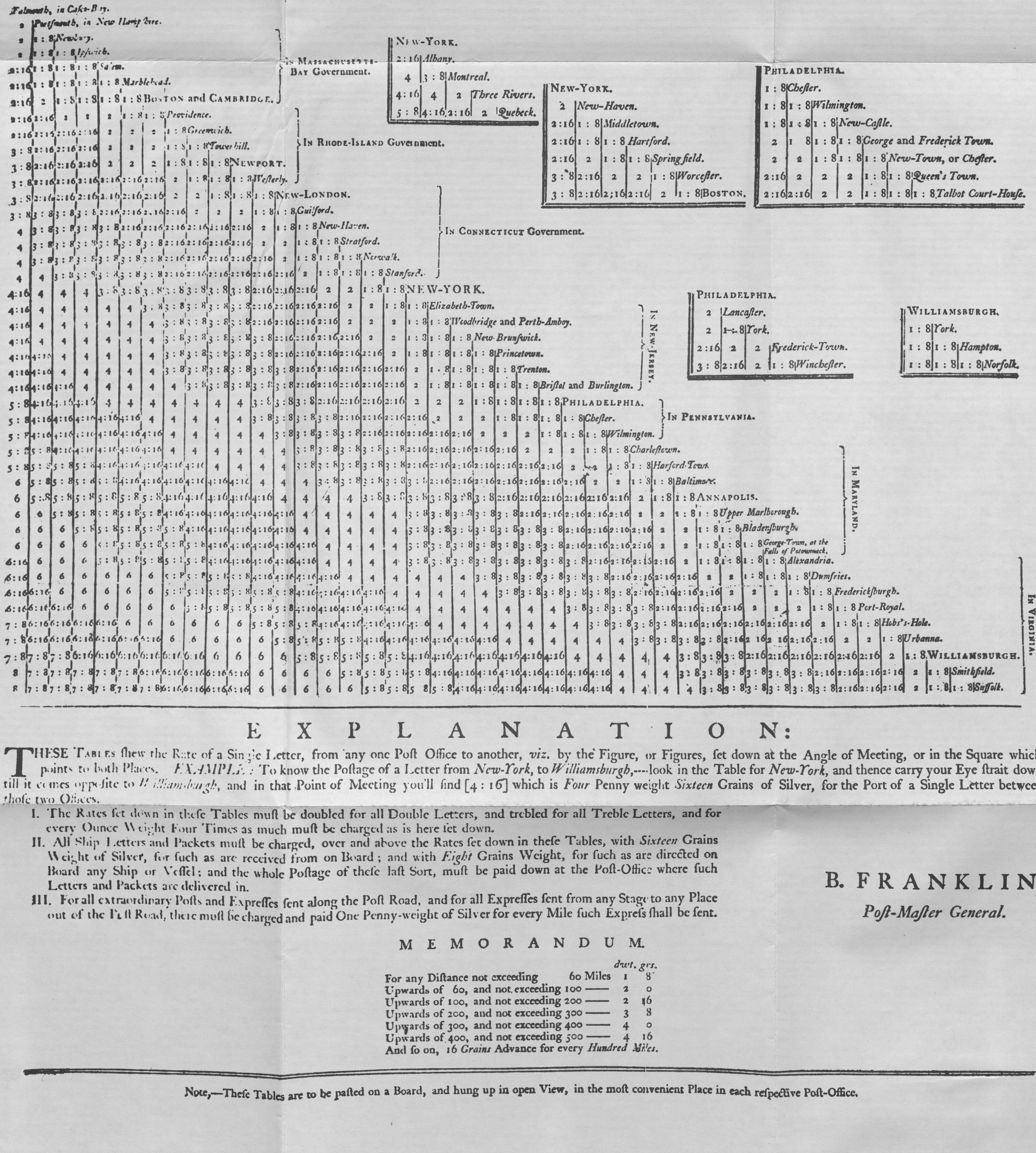
Of the Port of all SINGLE LETTERS carried by POST in the *Northern Diſtrict* of *NORTH-AMERICA*,

AS ESTABLISHED BY

CONGRESS,

One Thouſand Seven Hundred and *Seventy-five.*

Rated in PENNY-WEIGHTS and GRAINS of SILVER, at *Three Pence Sterling* for each *Penny Weight.*



EXPLANATION:

THESE TABLES ſhew the Rate of a Single Letter, from any one Poſt Office to another, *viz.* by the Figure, or Figures, ſet down at the Angle of Meeting, or in the Square which points to both Places. *EXAMPLE:* To know the Poſtage of a Letter from *New-York*, to *Williamsburgh*,---look in the Table for *New-York*, and thence carry your Eye ſtrait down till it comes oppoſite to *Williamsburgh*, and in that Point of Meeting you'll find [4 : 16] which is *Four* Penny weight *Sixteen* Grains of Silver, for the Port of a Single Letter between thoſe two Offices.

I. The Rates ſet down in theſe Tables muſt be doubled for all Double Letters, and trebled for all Treble Letters, and for every Ounce Weight Four Times as much muſt be charged as is here ſet down.

II. All Ship Letters and Packets muſt be charged, over and above the Rates ſet down in theſe Tables, with *Sixteen* Grains Weight of Silver, for ſuch as are received from on Board; and with *Eight* Grains Weight, for ſuch as are directed on Board any Ship or Veſſel; and the whole Poſtage of theſe laſt Sort, muſt be paid down at the Poſt-Office where ſuch Letters and Packets are delivered in.

III. For all extraordinary Poſts and Expreſſes ſent along the Poſt Road, and for all Expreſſes ſent from any Stage to any Place out of the Poſt Road, there muſt be charged and paid One Penny-weight of Silver for every Mile ſuch Expreſs ſhall be ſent.

B. FRANKLIN,

Poſt-Maſter General.

MEMORANDUM.

	dwt.	*grs.*
For any Diſtance not exceeding 60 Miles	1	8
Upwards of 60, and not exceeding 100 ——	2	0
Upwards of 100, and not exceeding 200 ——	2	16
Upwards of 200, and not exceeding 300 ——	3	8
Upwards of 300, and not exceeding 400 ——	4	0
Upwards of 400, and not exceeding 500 ——	4	16

And ſo on, 16 *Grains* Advance for every *Hundred Miles.*

Note,—Theſe Tables are to be paſted on a Board, and hung up in open View, in the moſt convenient Place in each reſpective Poſt-Office.